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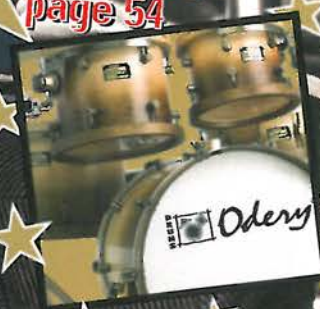

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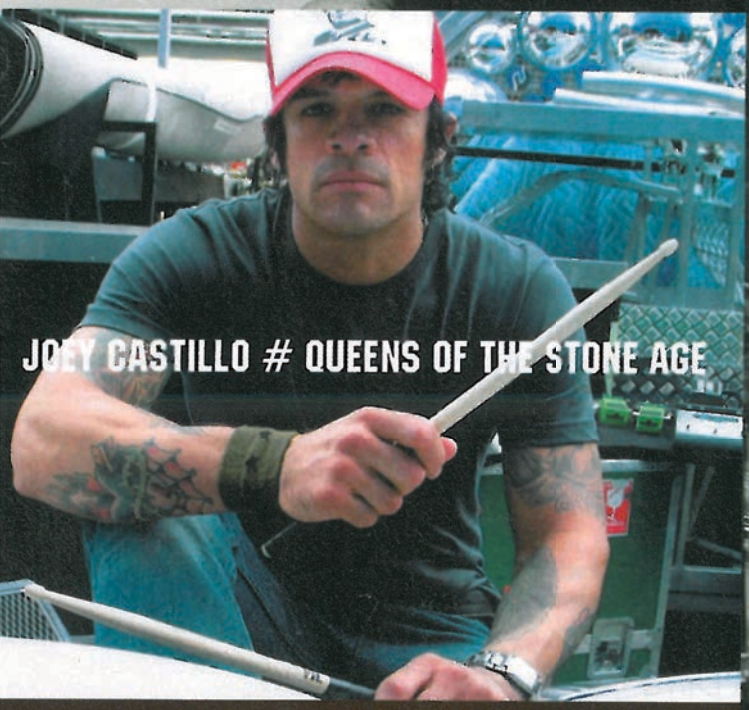

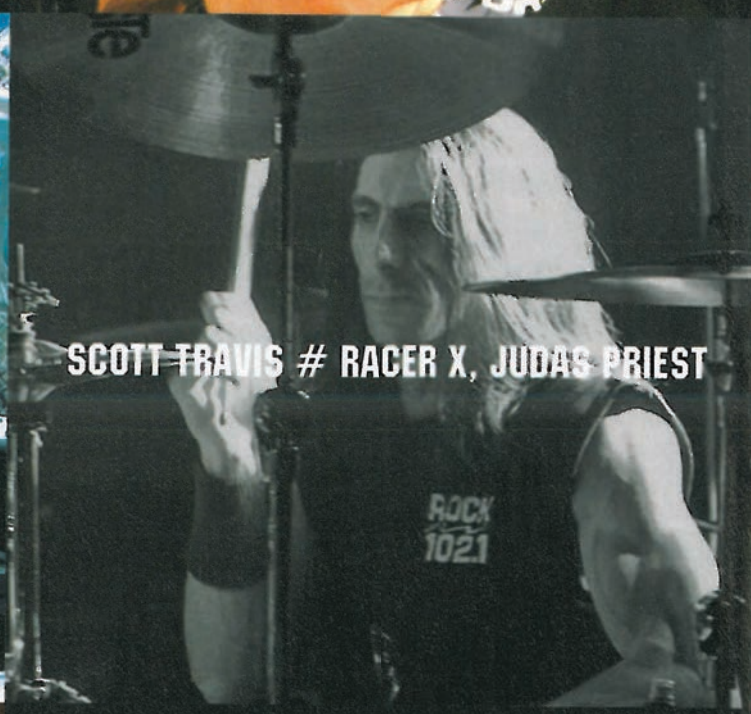

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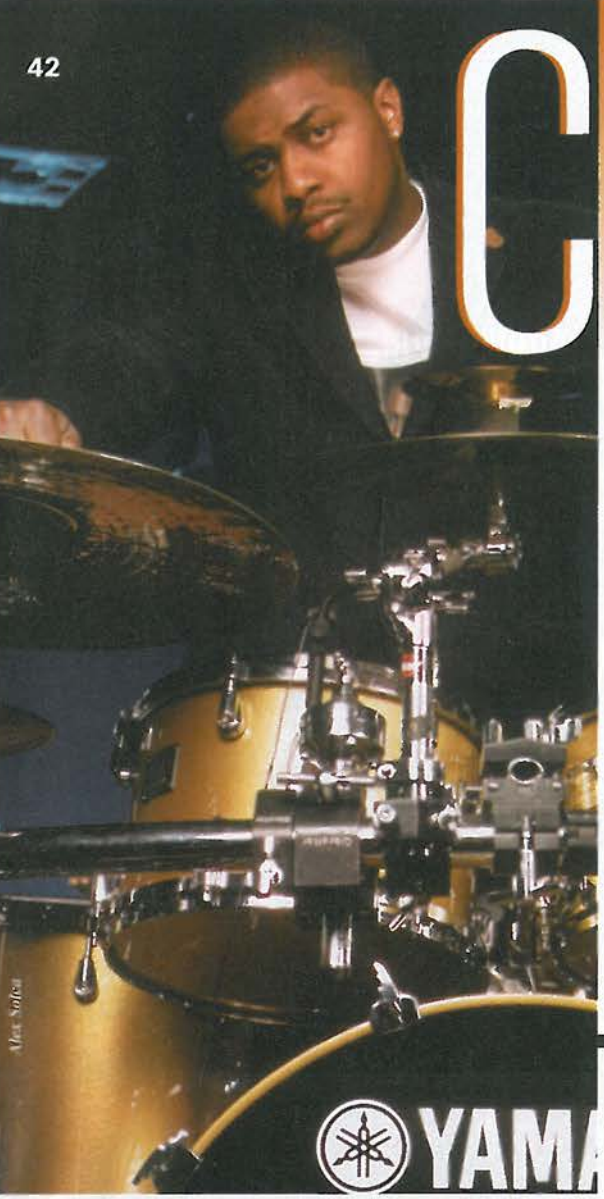

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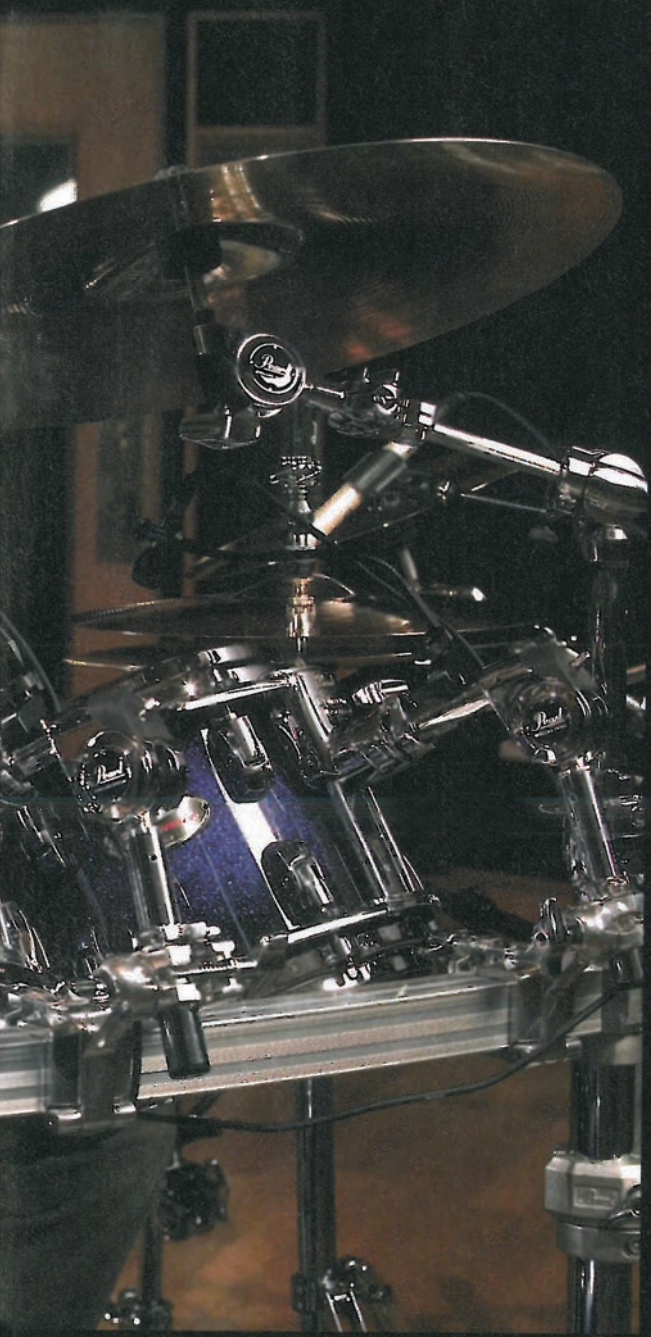

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Hot Fun In The Summertime

Happy summer, everyone! This is my favorite time of the year. Here in the east, it's the time to get outside and soak up the sunshine. It's also a great time to see some shows. Big concert tours happen mostly in the summer months, so if you can, take advantage of the chance to get out and support live music.

Our cover artist this month, Teddy Campbell, is using his break from his day job as drummer for *American Idol* to do some touring with his Gospel band The Soul Seekers. If heavy music's your thing, one of the biggest concert events every summer is Ozzfest. This year you can bang your head to, among other bands, Mastodon, featuring Brann Dailor.

Now, summer's also the time to sit back and relax, so, grab a good magazine (preferably ours) and enjoy. In this issue we cover ground as varied as the seasons themselves. Besides stories on Brann and Teddy, we visit with Chick Corea's Tom Brechtlein, as well as Christian music's Will Denton, who was formally with dc Talk and now backs Stephen Curtis Chapman.

We also go deep inside the World's Fastest Drummer organization, or the WFD as it's widely known. The late *Modern Drummer* founder, Ron Spagnardi, would be happy knowing the group has focused highly on educational issues in recent years. (Ron's editorial calling the WFD to task a few years ago ignited a firestorm of healthy discussion on the topic.) Also in this issue, check out Billy Ward's *Different View* piece on Geoff Daking's amazing career. We're also excited to have Billy Joel's Liberty DeVitto on "Playing With Passion," an excerpt from his forthcoming book.

So, enjoy all the great music, and have a safe and happy summer.

MODERN DRUMMER

Volume 29 Number 9

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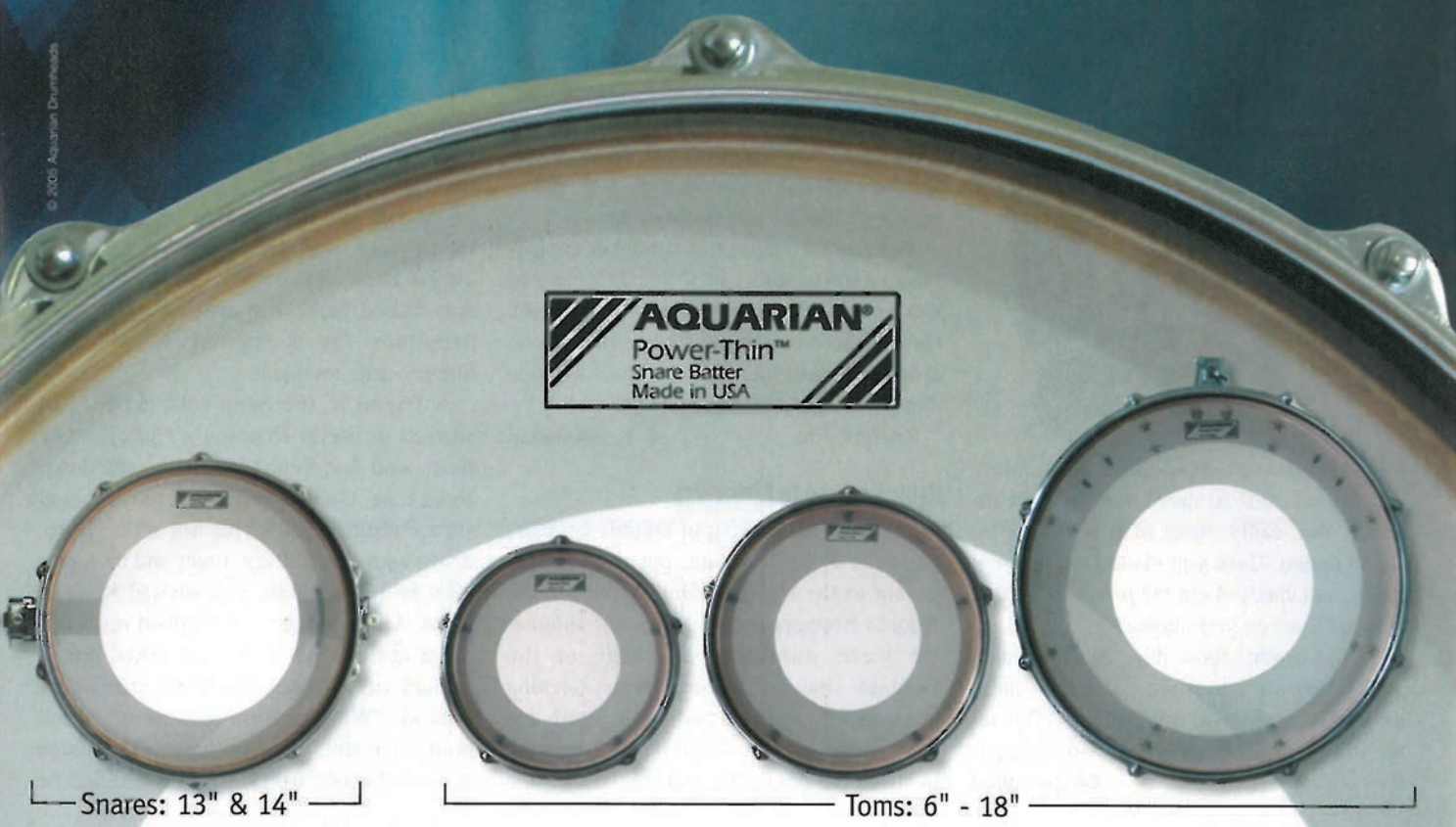


Jon Theodore

I was pleased to read the Jon Theodore interview in your June issue. Ken Micallef did a perfect job describing today's stale, mundane radio music, and how important it is to have an obscure "progressive" band like Mars Volta selling out small arenas nationwide (without needing pop-radio appeal for help).

Jon Theodore provided good insight on becoming not only a great drummer, but a *unique* drummer as well. Too often we hear redundant statements by drummers telling us to practice our rudiments, play for the song, stay in the pocket, yada yada. *Finally* a drummer talks about the importance of originality, and about challenging ourselves to create interesting grooves.

Can you imagine the members of The Who telling Keith Moon to just play in the pocket? We have an over-abundance of radio-friendly "pocket" drummers out there. Welcome back the thrills of what drumming should be: *exciting*. **Rolf Gunnar Hauge**

Great Gear Feature

Oh lord! You do this to me every year. Just when I think I've got everything I could possibly need or want in the way of drum equipment, along comes your annual "Great Gear" feature.

There's no way that I could ever afford all the stuff that I found myself coveting on those pages. But here and there I did discover items that just might find their way into my gear bags in the near future. The rest...well, I'll just have to keep coveting! **Sam Franklin**

Beautiful photos...innovative ideas...lots and lots of stuff to drool over and dream about. But, sadly, most of it will have to stay a dream. Have you visited a drumshop lately, and checked out the *prices* of all that "Great Gear" on your pages?

A ride cymbal these days costs as much as my first kit, and a pro-quality kit these days costs more than my last car. Who are the drum, cymbal, and percussion companies *selling* this stuff to? **Ed Canollian**

Jim Capaldi In Memoriam

Jim Capaldi did so much so well. As a kid I constantly came back to Traffic records, in an effort to cop Jim's particular combination of jazz and rock styles. (Not that I recognized them as such when I was fifteen.) He fused those styles so naturally that it just sounded like *him*.

I would play along with the *Dear Mr. Fantasy* and *Traffic* albums frequently, but *John Barleycorn* was a bottomless source of inspiration. The songs on that album (other than the title track) provided me with drumset moves that are part of me to this day.

Years ago, I overheard a bandmate complimenting me on my cymbal sound (something that would never have been done to my face). He couldn't understand why other good drummers with the same cymbals as mine didn't sound as expressive and musical.

Thanks, Jim. **Henehan**

Keith Knudsen In Memoriam

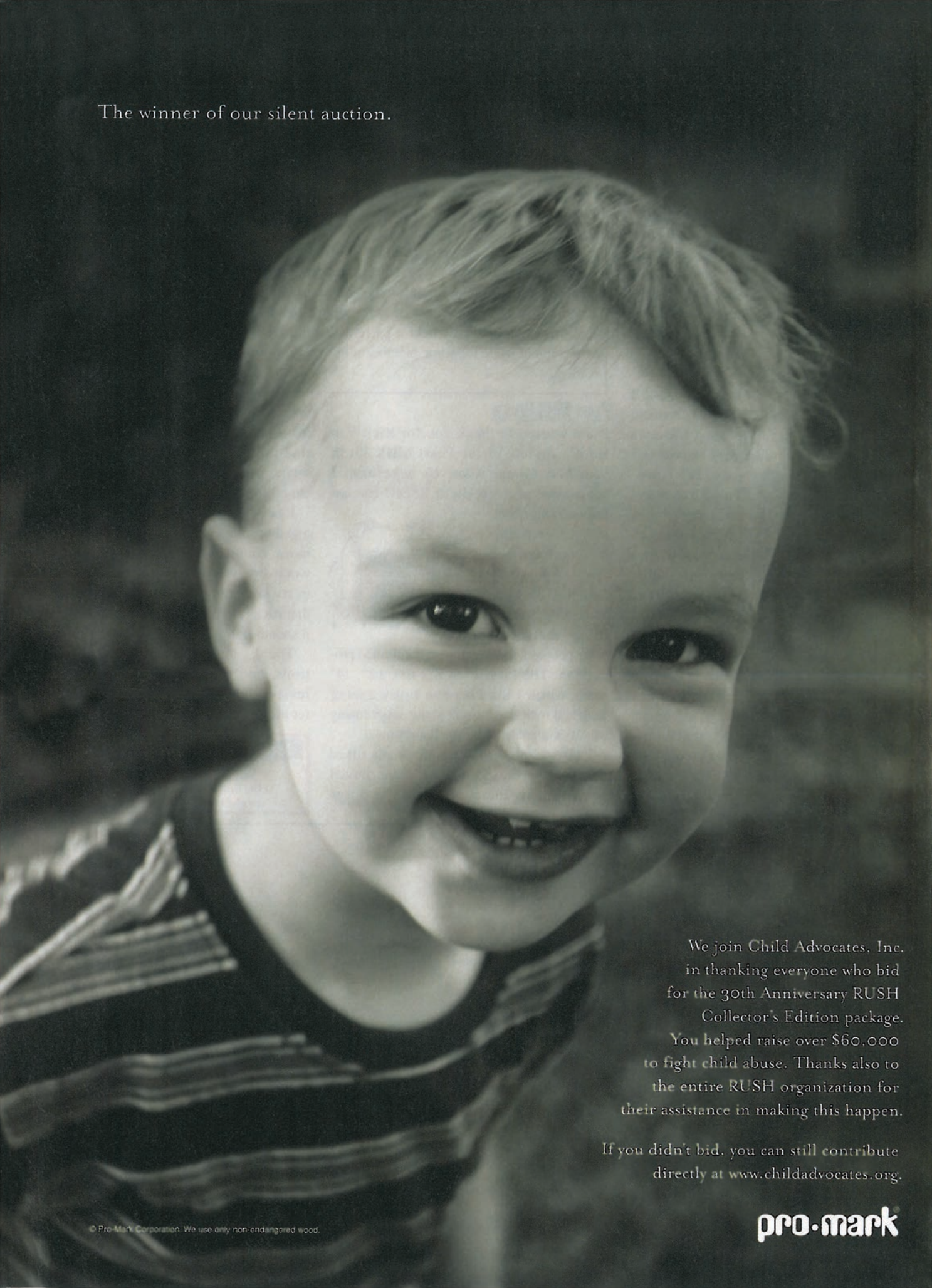
In regard to the passing of Doobie Brothers drummer Keith Knudsen, our condolences go out to the Knudsen family—and to the Doobie Brothers family. Only last summer we were standing backstage at the Doobies' show in Eugene, Oregon, seeking autographs. We chatted with Keith for forty minutes, after which he took us back to meet the band. We got our sticks and drumheads signed, and they even offered us some leftover lasagna!

We told Keith the story of how my wife and I both took up the drums at forty, about having my "Kid In A Candy Store" article published in *MD*, and about winning the Thomas Lang giveaway. All Keith could say was, "You guys are nuts about the drums!"

All we can say is, Heaven has another fine drummer. **Walt Cannon**

I had stopped playing drums for twenty years. Then I got brave, sat in on jam sessions in my area, and got some chops back. Eventually I was asked to be the core drummer for a regular Sunday-afternoon jam.

A friend in the band told me he had worked on Keith Knudsen's Harley a few times, and that Keith said he'd come down some time. One Sunday I was playing, and sure enough, Keith and his wife, Kate, drove up on the Harley. I met and took pictures with them both, then invited Keith to sit in. Afterward, he autographed my snare drum head. When I jokingly asked him if he had any extra drums lying around, he replied, "What kind do you want?" I felt bold, so I said, "Do you have a DW Edge snare in Blonde Brass?" He replied that he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actually had two: one 6x14 that was his main snare, and a 5x14 that he wasn't using much. He'd be happy to send me that one. I was floating on air!

Later, when The Doobies came to town, I took that drum to the show, hoping to get Keith to sign it. He met me in the lobby and we had another nice visit.

What I'm getting at is this: Keith Knudsen did everything anyone could have asked for—and all for a drummer he didn't know from Adam! He was a humble and very positive person, and unquestionably a "drummer's drummer." Thank you, Keith, and God bless you. **Phil Piper**

Antonio's Mexican Connection

Your May issue just got to Mexico, and I want to thank you for the article on Antonio Sanchez. I'm so proud to see a Mexican drummer featured on the cover of your fine publication. There are many great and popular Mexican drummers that deserve to be introduced to the world through your magazine, and this is a good start.

Please keep doing the excellent work you always do with your magazine. Thanks for all the tools, information, and inspiration. **Luis Vera**

Congratulations To Dom

My name is Kelly Yacco, and I run a private drum studio in Utica, New York. On this past April 17 it was my pleasure to welcome Dom Famularo to present two master classes for students ranging in age from eight to forty years of age. I'm extremely grateful to Dom for taking the time to come to our small community and enlighten my students with his enthusiasm and knowledge of drumming.

I've been studying under Dom myself for the past eighteen months, and he has influenced my own teaching technique tremendously. We have also become friends. So, in honor of Dom being voted #1 clinician in *MD*'s 2005 Readers Poll, my students and I held a party following Dom's master class to celebrate his achievement. Here are some pictures of that party, which I hope you can share with your readers. **Kelly Yacco**

Pearl MHR Review

I just wanted to thank you for Rick Van Horn's review of the Pearl MHR kit in your May *Product Close-Up* department. I bought one of those kits at PASIC late last fall because I fell in love with the kick drum and the finish of the kit. I also liked the idea of having something that few other people will have, due to the limited production. The kit had an 8", 10", 12", 14" setup, which I liked because I play a lot of funk and rock. I also wanted the easier tuning usually associated with smaller drums.

I also wanted to keep the heads tuned down to get a big, deep sound for the music I normally play. But even though I've gotten some nice compliments on the kit's sound in live situations, I've been frustrated trying to find the proper head selection. The kick sounds great, but I still can't get what I want out of the toms.

I can't believe I didn't put two and two together and figure out, as Rick did, that a more vintage-like head selection should work very well for these drums. I'm anxious to try something like the FiberSkyn setup that Rick suggested. I can't wait to hear how it sounds on my next gig!

Thanks again for the helpful suggestions, and for your continued unbiased reviews. The magazine keeps getting better all the time. **Randy Beck**

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6. DEREK GRANT (Alkaline Trio)
7. JOSH EPPARD (Coheed & Cambria)

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Pacific Snare Drum Shell Material?

I recently bought a used Pacific snare and I'm not sure of the shell material. It looks like hammered bronze, with big hammer marks. A friend who claims to know more about metallurgy than I do says it looks like copper. For all I know it could be brass. But I'm telling myself it's bronze because I like the idea of a snare drum made from a similar metal to that found in my Zildjians.

The drum sounds great, whatever it's made of—resonant proof that one need not spend a fortune to get good sound. It's warmer than a typical metal snare, but brighter than a typical wood model.

Perhaps you can clarify just what this shell is made of, and if it is, in fact, "hand-hammered." If it's any help, the label says "Pacific by Drum Workshop Made in Taiwan," with the number 46558.

Of course, what I'd *prefer* you tell me is, "Actually your snare isn't made of bronze, copper, *or* brass. The drum you possess is solid gold." **CC Cirillo**

We forwarded your inquiry to DW director of marketing Scott Donnell, who replies, "The PDP SX Hammered Metal Snares were introduced in late 2002, and they've been popular drums in the line for the reasons you outline. They have a bright metal crack, but are warmer than some of the metal snares we are accustomed to. That's likely due to the hammered texture, which may soften the brightness and ping. And yes, the drum is indeed hand hammered.

"Even though the serial number is provided, I'm still not sure exactly when the drum was made, because we didn't code a manufacturing date into the serial itself. For 2003 the drum was phosphor bronze; in 2004 we switched to brass. Unfortunately, we couldn't find a way to do gold at that price point."

Drying Out A Cymbal's Sound

I have a Paiste 802 20" ride cymbal that's too washy for my taste. Is there was any way to dry it out and make it "pingier" instead of buying a new cymbal? Maybe rivets? Sam

You're actually describing two separate goals. If you wish to reduce wash and "dry out" the sound of the ride, a few strips of duct tape (about 4" long) placed a couple of inches in from the edge of the cymbal and running more or less parallel to the edge will have that effect. You wouldn't want to add rivets, because they would actually counter this effect by adding a sustained "sizzle" to the cymbal's sound.

A "pingier" sound usually refers to the frequency (high vs. low) of the sound of the stick attack, as well as how pronounced that attack is. There's not much you can do to change the frequency of the cymbal itself, but you can promote what highs it has by using a nylon-tipped stick rather than a wood-tipped model. Also, if you want a sound that's more pointed and precise, consider a stick with a ball-shaped tip, which will maximize the attack.

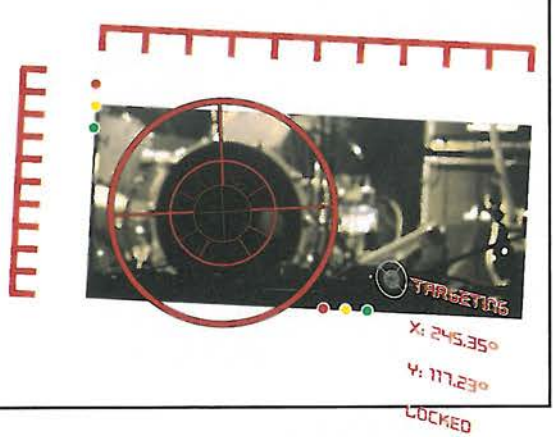
Sweet Spot On Bass Drum Heads?

Why don't drumhead manufacturers put some kind of reference mark on the center of the bass drum head? That way, it'll be easier to align the beater as close as possible to the dead center (sweet spot), thus enabling us to get the most punch from the bass drum. **Nal Kampan**

To begin with, it's pretty easy for any drummer to locate the center of the head visually. If more precision is desired, it's a simple matter to draw lines between lug points and find the center of the head where those lugs intersect.

More importantly, not every drummer would agree that the "sweet spot" of a bass drum head is at the exact center. While a center impact point will likely produce the greatest "punch," some drummers prefer to hit a head slightly off-center in order to gain a little more resonance. Also, a drummer's preference in beater length may preclude that beater hitting the head at dead center.

The bottom line is that an unmarked drumhead provides a "blank canvas" on which any given drummer can create what he or she needs from the drum.



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Die-Cast Vs. 2.3-mm Hoops

A young drummer friend recently asked me a question that I, embarrassingly, don't know the answer to. I hope you can give him an educated answer. The question is: What is the difference between die-cast and 2.3-mm hoops?

Bert

Hoops referred to as 2.3-mm are the largest and strongest among those manufactured of cold rolled steel. They start life as flat bars of steel, are shaped into hoops by various machine operations, and are then welded together to form a complete circle.

Die-cast hoops are cast in molds called "dies" (hence their name). They are created of a molten metal alloy—usually involving zinc, chromium, and other metals—and are literally molded as one single piece.

The musical difference between the two is that steel hoops tend to give a drum a little ringier, more resonant sound, while die-cast hoops tend to give a drum a drier, more focused sound. Rimshots on die-cast hoops tend to have a little more dry "crack."

Also, steel hoops tend to have more flex, while die-cast hoops are very rigid. This means that steel hoops might be a little more "forgiving" with a drum whose edges are not perfect, conforming to those edges and making the drum a little easier to tune. The downside of that flexibility is that the hoops themselves might flex on a drum whose edges are fine, making that drum a little *harder* to tune.

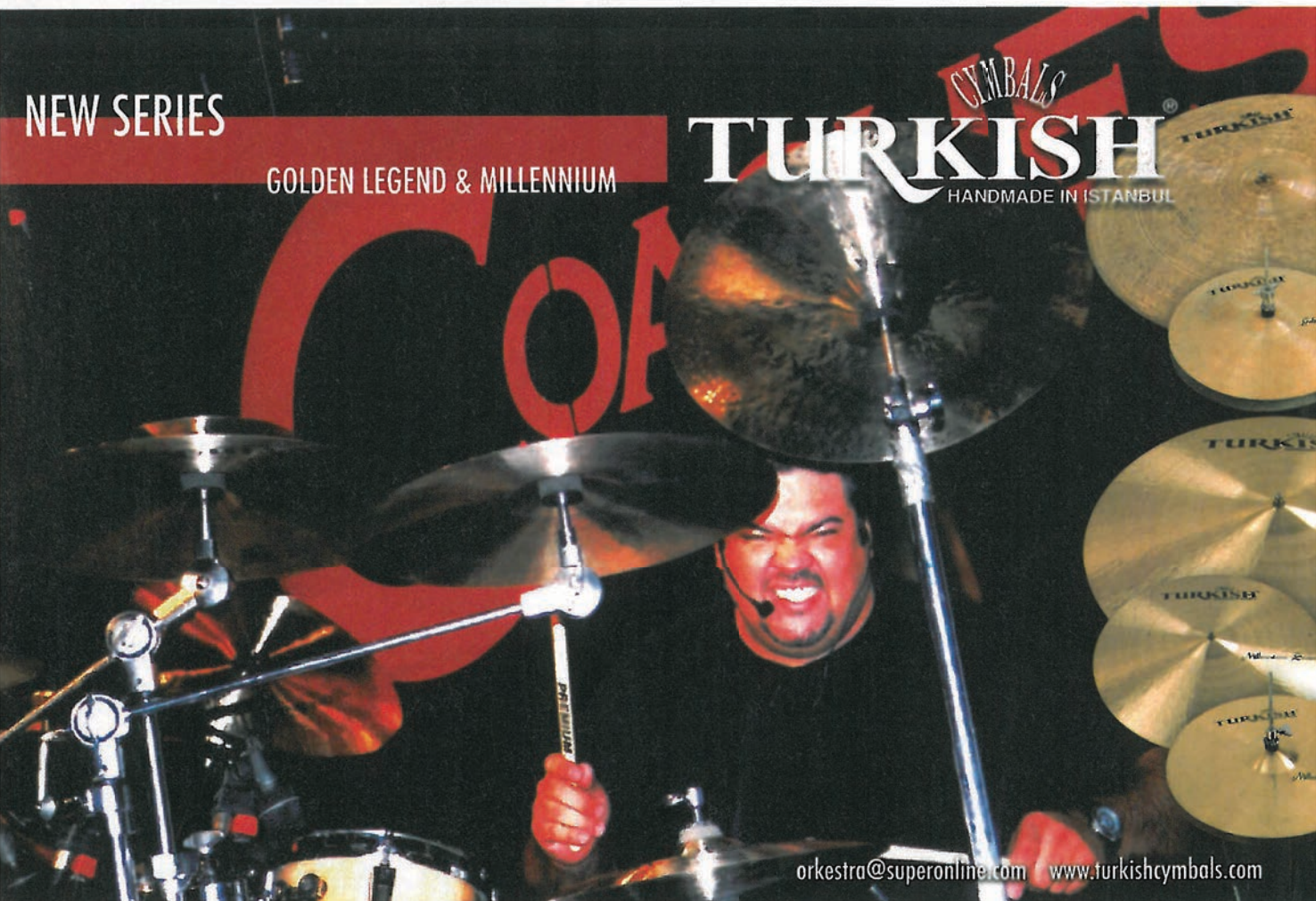
Conversely, die-cast hoops will hold a tuning—sometimes even if a single tension rod is loose—because of the rigid pressure they exert all around the drum. That's good if the drum's edges are perfect, but can be problematic if they aren't.

From a purely physical point of view, die-cast hoops tend to be larger and heavier than rolled steel hoops, and thus add weight and diameter to the drum. This can be an issue when it comes to carrying the drum and fitting it onto a snare drum stand.

The Fibes snares shown above are fitted with 2.3-mm hoops, while the Pearl Virgil Donati snare at left features die-cast hoops.

QUESTIONS FOR MD'S DRUM EXPERTS?

Send them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, or rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.



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Peter Erskine's Diana Krall Setup

Q I recently saw Diana Krall's *Live At The Montreal Jazz Festival* DVD with you on drums. Your playing and your sound are both really great. I'd like to know the details of your setup for that performance, including the drums, cymbals, and heads. Thanks!

Klaus Marner

A Thank you for your enthusiasm and interest. The *Live At The Montreal Jazz Festival* DVD was just that: a "live" broadcast originally intended for Canadian television. It seems that the video captures the band of Diana Krall, Anthony Wilson (guitar), Bob Hurst (bass), and myself doing what we did for most of 2004: playing a lot of 4/4 and having fun in front of a whole bunch of people. In other words, it's fairly representative and a nice documentation of the tour.

I was using my Yamaha Maple Custom Absolute drumset, with a 14x18 bass drum, an 8x12 rack tom, and a 14x14 floor tom. These are the so-called "jazz" or "traditional" drum depths/dimensions. Yamaha's 18" bass drums are elevated a couple of inches off of the ground, which really allows the drum to sing.

The snare drum I used that evening (not knowing that the show would wind up being a DVD) was a birthday gift: a single-piece "Timeless Timber" oak snare drum, measuring 4x14. I used it for some of the tour.

Most of the hardware for the kit is fairly light, but it's sturdy enough to withstand the rigors of traveling. I like to use a heavy-duty seat, and I can highly recommend either the Yamaha mesh seat or foam/padded seat with the hydraulic base. (Roc-N-Soc also makes some excellent drum thrones. Hey, we are afforded the status of royalty in some bands!)

The choice of heads will always have a lot to do with the sound of the drums, as well as with the "feel" of the kit for the player. I use Evans J1 etched heads on the tops and bottoms of my toms and bass drum for almost all of my jazz work. The exception with Diana is the bass drum, where I used an Evans EMAD batter head with an Evans EQ Pillow inside the drum, resting against the front/resonant head. The drum was pitched low, and it was miked from the beater side. Evans G1 coated heads also work well on the toms and bass drum for jazz—especially if you want to tune them up high.

I used my standard Zildjian cymbal setup for that gig. It consists of (from my left to my right) a pair of 14" New Beat hi-hats, a 22" K Custom Left Side ride with three rivets, a 20" K Flat ride prototype (a "Holy Grail" of cymbals!), a 22" K Constantinople medium ride, a 22" Swish Knocker, a 16" K Custom Special Dry crash, and an 18" K medium thin Dark crash.

I used the Peter Erskine Ride stick by Vic Firth, along with Firth's Heritage brushes. I also used G1 general purpose timpani mallets for cymbal rolls on ballads. Holding all of the various sticks, brushes, and mallets—as well as providing a small table for a towel and that evening's set list—was the Peter Erskine Free-Standing stick bag by Yamaha.

Additional equipment I brought with me on that tour included Purecussion snare wires, XL Specialty Protechtor cases for those dates when we would fly, Beato bags for the tour dates where the equipment traveled in trucks (inside of flight cases), and LP percussion instruments including their mountable Cyclops tambourine (with brass jingles), their new rotary-ball percussion mount for mounting the tambourine and cluster chimes, and (not in the video, but later during the tour) a Giovanni Compact Conga. I also traveled with a DrumDial tuner, as well as a Yamaha Click Station metronome for documenting rehearsal tempos.

It was a privilege and a groove to travel with Diana for nearly a year as the drummer in her band. If you'd like to check out some photos from the tour, please visit my Web site at petererskine.com. I have quite a few fun shots archived there.

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Tommy Lee's
Stick Tricks And Electronic Sounds

Q I recently went to one of your concerts, and I became an instant fan. I have two questions. First, I was absolutely blown away by all the stick throwing and twirling. You do it so perfectly. I was wondering if you could give me any tips or suggest any books or videos on that.

I was also wondering which electronic pads and brain you use. Any information would be great. **Dominic**

A Thanks for the props, dude! I worked on my stick tricks in my backyard as a kid. It took a while, and sticks were flying everywhere! But I eventually developed my own little repertoire of twirls and other tricks. I can't describe them all in print. But as a matter of fact, there is a book (and a video) on stick twirling, called *Spinology*, by Steve Stockmal. Check it out at www.drstix.com. Also, *MD* did a feature on the subject of stick twirling in the January 2003 issue. You can contact the magazine's back-issue department to see about getting a copy.

As for electronics on my kit, I use a ddrum 2 brain, which has all digitally recorded live drum sounds. I trigger those sounds with Hart Dynamics pads. Thanks for your questions.

Alex Solca

Repeat Bar
A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"I don't consider myself a great innovator. But I am proud that I was always called again by the various leaders I worked with. That's what's important, to give them what they want so they'll call you again."
jazz great **Al Foster**, April 2003

John Abbott

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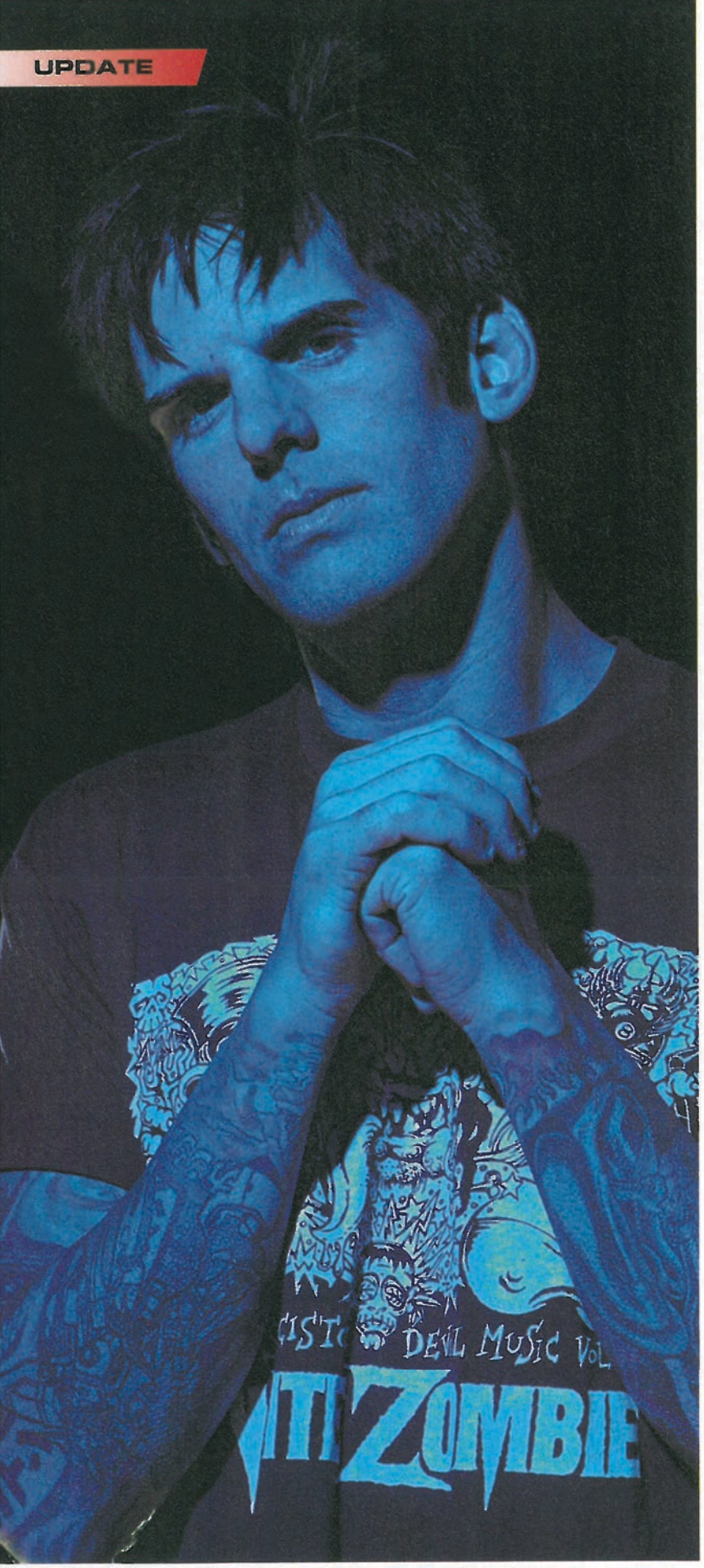


ADEMA'S KRIS KOHLS
THE PLANETS ARE ALIGNED

Having parted ways with lead singer Marky Chavez *and* its former record label in the course of a year, heavy metal band Adema has boldly released its third CD, *Planets*. Drummer Kris Kohls enthusiastically believes this record is the band's best one yet. "In the past," Kohls says, "we felt creatively limited. Our last record, *Unstable*, was very 'cookie cutter' and not up to our collective potential of playing or songwriting. As a band, we *knew* we could do better, especially if we found the right singer."

Shortly after signing a new deal with Earache Records, Adema gave itself a much needed transfusion of new blood with the addition of vocalist Luke Caraccioli. "We wanted someone with a completely different, original sound," says the drummer. "That's what we got with Luke. *Planets* is basically our dream record.

"We had a good idea of what we wanted for the vocals when we started recording," Kris continues. "But we hadn't found Luke yet. Since there was no danger of stepping on vocals drum-wise, I was able to really let loose and be in the moment with my playing. Obviously, I tried to play for the song. But I wasn't afraid to throw some licks in there."

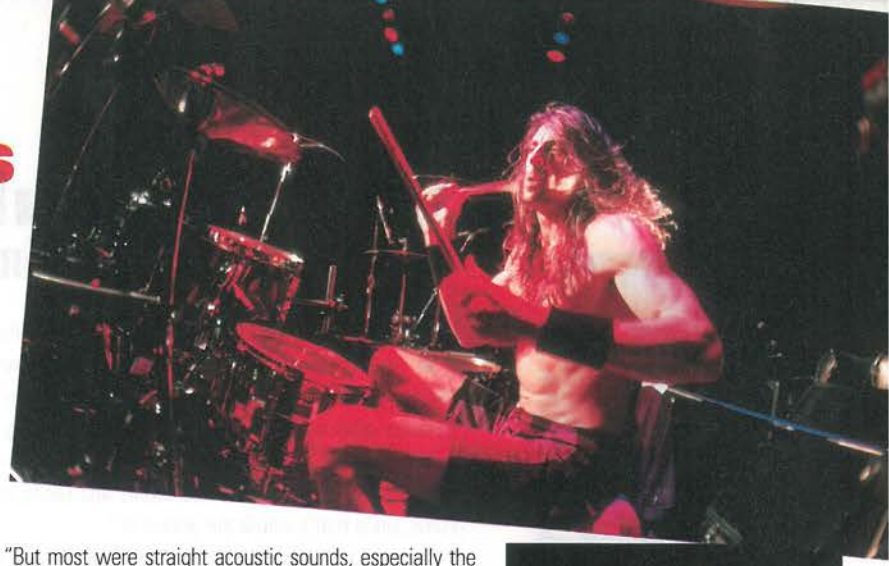
Accustomed to playing fast, uptempo rock, Kris found that the CD's title ballad threw him a bit of a curveball. "I love how the song 'Planets' came out," he says, "but sometimes playing softer and slower is more difficult for me. Most of the songs were done in one or two takes, but 'Planets' took seven or eight before I was happy with it. That track moves a lot and there are lots of dynamics, so it's really cool. But getting the groove perfect was challenging."

Unlike Adema's two previous albums, programming was completely eliminated from the recording of *Planets*. "This record is all just me playing drums straight through," Kris states. "There are no electronics. We wanted to capture a raw, live energy. Musically, our chemistry is insane, and we called the record *Planets* because this cosmic, magical thing happened when Luke joined the band. The planets just aligned and it was like, wow, destiny." **Gail Worley**

JUDAS PRIEST'S

Scott Travis

The Metal Gods Return

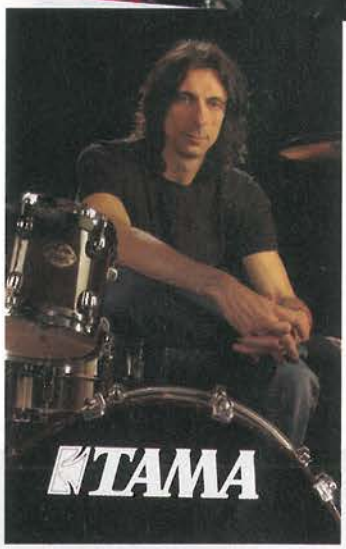


It's been fourteen long years since the unmistakable voice of Rob Halford parted ways with innovative metal pioneers Judas Priest. The trendsetters of leather, studs, and motorcycle-laden imagery single-handedly engineered the format for all metal heads to follow. Drummer Scott Travis had just joined the band at that time and recorded the now classic *Painkiller* album when Halford announced his departure. The band treaded water with Halford sound-alike Ripper Owens, while hardcore Priest fans cried out for Halford's return.

Finally, in 2003, Halford and Judas Priest agreed to reunite. And now, with reunion album *Angel Of Retribution* entering Billboard's Top-200 at Number 13 (the highest debut and highest charting album in their thirty-plus-year career), the band is enjoying extraordinary success and touring worldwide to sold-out crowds. And Scott Travis's drumming, with its driving double bass grooves, fat drum sounds, and molten metal feel, is as impressive as ever.

"It's great having Rob back," Scott says. "He was in the band when I joined, and I became accustomed to playing the classic Priest material with him. He also played a major role in the songwriting, which changed drastically when he left. His input in the new music has made all the difference in rejuvenating the band and bringing back the classic elements. It was the shot in the arm that we desperately needed."

The new album finds Scott's parts touched by today's technology. "Some of the drum sounds were altered slightly with synthetic sounds in Pro Tools," Scott admits. "But most were straight acoustic sounds, especially the snare drums." And the parts Travis plays are *definitely* all him. "In Judas Priest," the drummer clearly states, "nobody else plays drums. So they let me create the drum parts. I usually get my way."



In terms of his gear, Scott says he's made only minor changes in his setup. "I've stopped using power toms and switched to Tama's classic tom sizes—8x10, 8x12, and 10x13," he says. "I still play 24" bass drums, and the shorter tom depth lets me position them lower, which is much more comfortable. And I've just added a 10" tom to the left of my hi-hat for producing those classic, extended Judas Priest fills played by my predecessors, Les Binks and Simon Phillips."

How does Travis feel about continuing in the thirty-year Priest legacy? "At this point, there are very few first-generation metal bands still around," he says. "Judas Priest is not ashamed of being considered a classic metal band, and I'm honored to still be a part of it."

Mike Haid

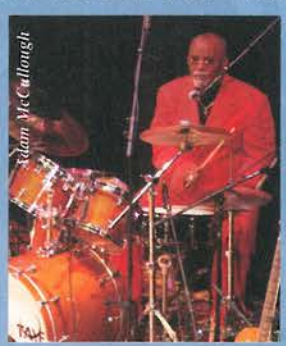
Ricky McKinnie

Drumming With The Blind Boys Of Alabama

When drummer Ricky McKinnie lost his sight from glaucoma in 1975, he was never going to let it stop him from doing what he loves most. He had been playing drums since the age of twelve and was given the "most talented musician" award in high school, after which he attended Decamp College in Atlanta. Then, fifteen years ago, McKinnie found his perfect musical outlet—working with the Grammy award–winning Gospel act The Blind Boys Of Alabama, a group with four blind members.

"I just kept doing what I was doing," says McKinnie in regards to his joining The Blind Boys. The drummer had been playing with another Gospel group at the time he joined. "Even though I couldn't see, I could feel the beat," McKinnie says. "It's pretty much all in the touch. I have what is called phantom sight, which means I had sight long enough that I can imagine things in my head. All of that works together to help me play."

Although McKinnie did not record The Blind Boys' latest album, *Atom Bomb*, he can be heard on the band's live recordings and on their *Go Tell It On The Mountain* DVD. "In order to be a good Gospel drummer," he says, "you have to be steady with your beat. I've also learned to adjust the feel to take the music where it needs to go."



When McKinnie lost his sight, he went to school to read Braille and for mobility training. "I travel pretty well," he says. Good thing. The band is on the road approximately two hundred days out of the year. Incredibly, McKinnie also serves as the group's tour manager, securing all their travel plans and cars and "everything that keeps the band on the road."

McKinnie is a positive soul. "My motto is, I'm not blind—I just can't see," he insists. "I've always told people that I've been able to take a disability and turn it into an *ability*. Tough times don't last, but tough people do."

Robyn Flans

Little Barrie's
Wayne Fullwood
A Mean, Simmering Groove

We Are Little Barrie, the debut release by London trio Little Barrie, has drawn enthusiastic critical comparisons to the early Rolling Stones and James Brown for its irresistible groove that swings between '60s-inspired soulful rock and funky blues. Driving the group's lo-fi, old-school rock is the raw, energetic drumming of Wayne Fullwood, who was actually a guitarist before joining Little Barrie in 2000.

"When I've played guitar in bands, I've really been into rhythms," Wayne explains. "I listened to what the drummers were doing on their snare drums and really locked into it. I guess it was inevitable that I'd end up playing drums, since that's where the groove is."

Fullwood's drumming influences include Booker T's Al Jackson, Bernard Purdie, and Motown drummer Benny Benjamin. "I also love Ginger Baker's drumming with Blind Faith," he adds, "as well as The Spencer Davis Group's Pete York and Jim Capaldi of Traffic. I think a lot of those drummers were into jazz, and it was almost a bit beneath them to be playing pop songs—but they did it well!"

Wayne sings backup on most of the songs on the CD, and even takes over lead vocals on "Please Tell Me" and "Stones Throw." "When I'm singing behind my kit, I think of Levon Helm and Buddy Miles," he offers. "Part of making it work is being totally comfortable and really well rehearsed. As soon as I got my kit, I sang while playing. That puts things into context, where you start thinking about song structures, laying off a bit in sections, and getting the feel for the dynamics of everything."

Little Barrie's stripped-down ethic is reflected by Wayne's very minimal setup: kick, snare, hi-hat, and two recently added cymbals. "There's a lot to be said for a minimal approach," the drummer says. "If you've got a feel for it, you don't need a lot of gear to play a mean, simmering groove."

Gail Worley

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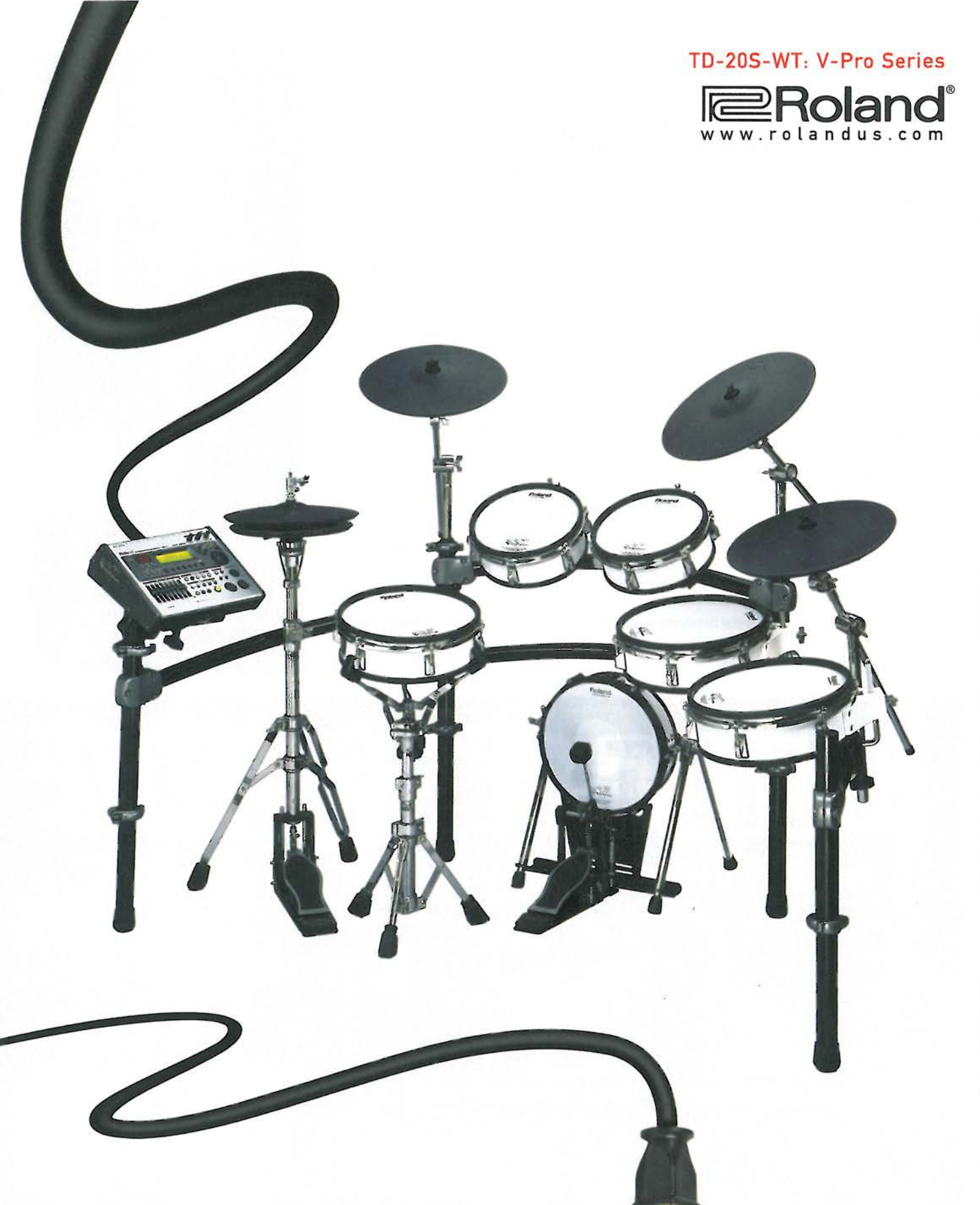

EXPRESSION

Angra's Aquiles Priester
Brazilian Metal Magic

When he decided to be a drummer, Aquiles Priester couldn't have imagined the paths music would take him along. After studying with renowned drummers, playing in many groups, founding the band Hangar, doing a Brazilian tour, and recording Paul Di'Anno's *Nomad* album, he joined Angra, the major Brazilian heavy metal band. Priester has since recorded the albums *Rebirth* (2001), *Hunters And Prey* (2002), and *Temple Of Shadows* (2004). Last year, he also released his solo DVD, *Inside My Drums*, which features his performances from a behind-the-drums point of view.

Aquiles' style is energetic, fast, and aggressive, with a lot of fills and advanced double bass drum technique. His feel is very personal as well. He's always looking for new musical information in order to create fresh grooves and to make his drum parts unique.

About his shedding routine, Aquiles insists, "I practice four hours each day to keep up my stamina. To have conditions similar to the kinds I usually perform in, which are usually very challenging physically, I even practice when I'm very tired. This keeps me in good shape and helps my focus. I'll play nonstop for hours. And, of course, I try to find time to work on new techniques, methods, and other musical styles. I feel that's really important for drummers."

Angra's tunes are characterized by a strong influence of Brazilian music. Some grooves are inspired by maracatu and samba beats. On the song "Morning Star," the drums and percussion seem to be completely in sync. "For the *Temple Of Shadows* recording sessions," Priester explains, "I asked my bandmates to give me the songs without any beats. That way, I could create with more leeway and not be stuck to a predetermined rhythm pattern. That made the drum parts on this CD a lot different from those on the past two albums."

For more info on this Brazilian metal drumming great, visit www.aquilespriester.com. **André Carvalho**

NEWS

Shawn Drover is currently on tour with Megadeth on their *Gigantour* tour.

Adrian Ost is on tour with Powerman 5000 in support of their new album.

Dennis Chambers is on Japanese bass phenom Tetsuo Sakurai's new DVD, which was recorded live in Japan last year. Dennis can also be heard on Tetsuo's *Gentle Hearts* CD, as well as on Greg Howe's *Extraction*.

Ben Graves is currently in the drum chair for Nocturne's latest tour. Also on the bill is Pigface, featuring **Martin Atkins**.

Jack Mouse is on *Standard Procedure*, the new one from Dan Haerle.

Chad Smith is on *Ohmwork*, the latest from Black Sabbath bassist Geezer Butler's GZR project.

Darryl White is on tour with Tab Benoit and appears on Benoit's latest CD, *Fever For The Bayou*.

Erik Eldenius is on Low Millions' debut, *Ex-Girlfriends*. For more info, check out www.lowmillions.com. You can also hear Erik on Adam Cohen's solo CD, *Melancolista*, the *American Idol* CD, and Jim Brickman's *Grace*.

Meat Beat Manifesto's *At The Center* features **Dave King** of The Bad Plus.

Frank Black's latest, *Honeycomb*, features **Chester Thompson**, **Anton Fig**, **Billy Block**, and **Akil Thompson**.

Rich Thompson is on Trio East's *Stop—Start*.

The recent Steve Shapiro/Pat Bergeson album, *Low Standards*, features **Jeff Williams** on drums.

John Wicks is cutting tracks with producer Ron Aniello for Heather Porcaro's CD. (Heather is Jeff's niece, Steve's daughter, and Joe's granddaughter.)

Dan Lamagna is on Suicide City's debut EP. The band also features Billy Graziadei from Biohazard and Jennifer Arroyo from Kittie. For more info, check out www.suicidecity.com.

Gerald Heyward is on Rob Thomas's solo CD, *Something To Be*.

Tom Gryskiewicz is on The Starting Line's latest, *Based On A True Story*.

Tony Mason is touring with Martha Wainwright.

Alicia Warrington is touring with Kelly Osbourne.

Heart drummer **Ben Smith** is in the studio with Nancy Wilson, working on the soundtrack to the next Cameron Crowe film. Smith is also working with Alice In Chains/Ozzy bassist Mike Inez on a new recording.

Mike Nielson is on The Valley Arena's latest, *Take Comfort In Strangers*.

Robert Sweet is back with Stryper, on a new album called *Reborn*. A DVD of a concert in Puerto Rico in 2004 has also just been released.

Abe Laboriel was recently in the studio with Eric Clapton, Eros Ramazotti, Tyler Hilton, Patti LaBelle, and Sheryl Crow. He will also be on a fall tour with Paul McCartney.

Steve Gorman is back with The Black Crowes.

Paul Bostaph has replaced **Tom Hunting** in Exodus.

Congratulations to Julie and **Deen Castronovo** on the birth of their son, Roman Jude.

And congratulations also to Maria and **David Garibaldi** on the birth of their son, Marco Giovanni.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Buddy Rich was born on 9/30/17. **Elvin Jones** was born on 9/9/27. Original Average White Band drummer **Robbie McIntosh** passed away on 9/23/74, **Keith Moon** on 9/7/78, **John Bonham** on 9/25/80, **Shelly Manne** on 9/26/84, and **Philly Joe Jones** in September of '85.

On 9/6/40, **Baby Dodds** records *Blues In Thirds* with clarinetist Sidney Bechet and pianist Earl Hines.

On 9/25/70, **Ringo Starr** releases his second solo record, *Beaucoups Of Blues*.

On 9/6/80, Paul Simon (with **Steve Gadd** on drums) enters the Billboard charts with his album *One Trick Pony*. Two years later, on 9/6/82, Steve is again on the charts, this time on Paul McCartney's *Tug Of War*.

On 9/14/04, **Elvin Jones'** last record, *Someday My Prince Will Come*, is posthumously released.

Happy Birthday!

Chico Hamilton (jazz great): 9/21/21

Martin Chambers (Pretenders): 9/4/51

Robin Goodridge (Bush): 9/10/66

Horacee Arnold (educator, author): 9/25/35

Neil Peart (Rush): 9/12/52

Stephen Perkins (Jane's Addiction): 9/13/67

Ron Bushy (Iron Butterfly): 9/23/45

Tyler Stewart (Barenaked Ladies): 9/21/67

Greg Errico (Sly & The Family Stone): 9/1/46

Zak Starkey (The Who): 9/13/65

Brad Wilk (Audioslave): 9/5/68

Don Brewer (Grand Funk Railroad): 9/3/48

Ginger Fish (Marilyn Manson): 9/28/65

John Blackwell (Prince): 9/9/73

MD Radio — To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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Artist: Gregg Bissonette (Independent)
Date/Time: 3/1/05 05:07:38
Fact: Gregg road tested the very first DW double pedal prototype in 1982... on a year-long tour with The Maynard Ferguson Big Band.

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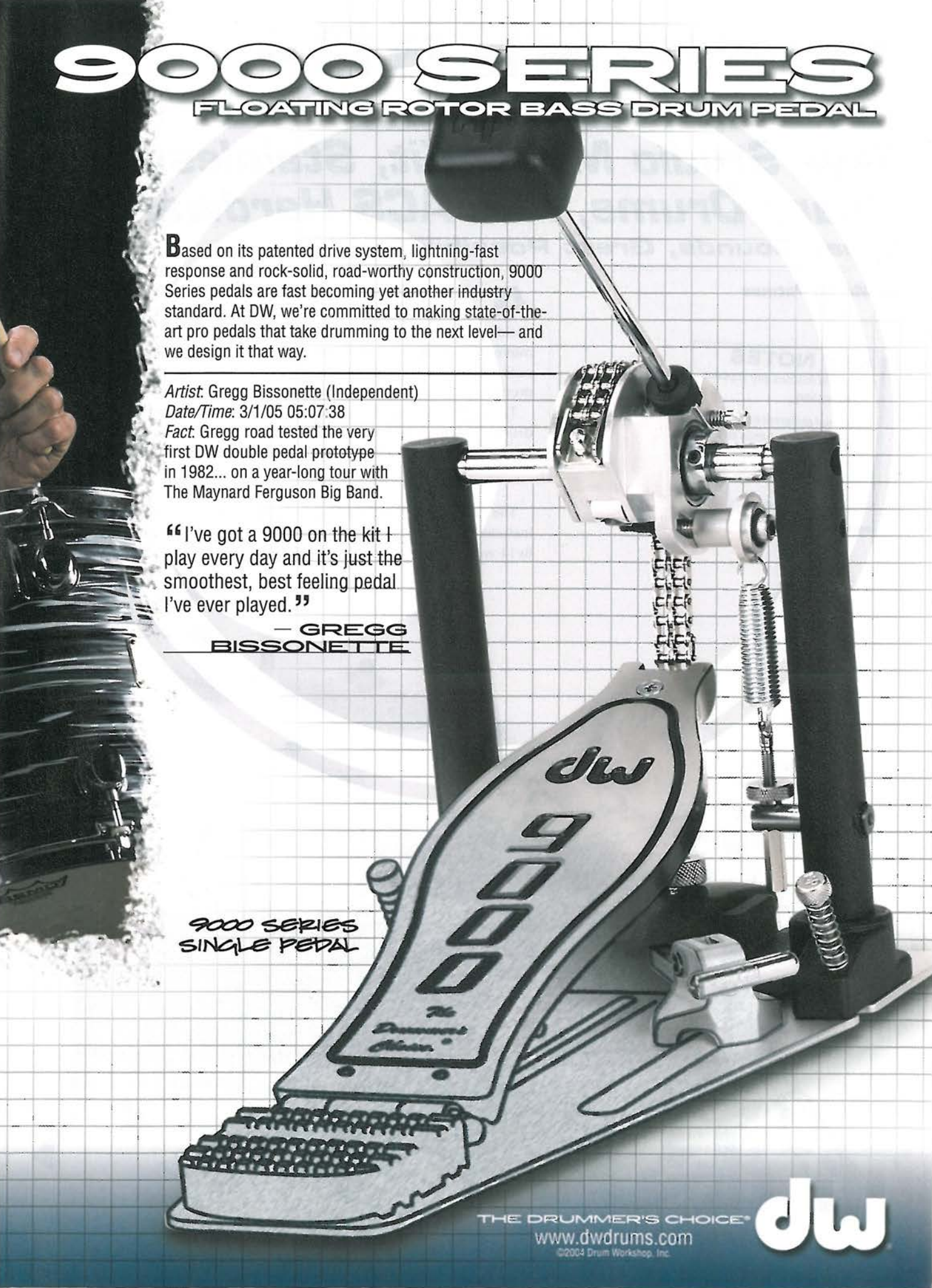
— GREGG BISSONETTE



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Taye Studio Maple Kit, Stainless Steel Snare Drums, And ACS Hardware

Great Sounds, Great Possibilities

by Martin Patmos

KEY NOTES

- beautiful finishes and superior construction
- personal preference may lead some to change heads on toms
- ACS hardware offers limitless setup possibilities
- bass drum beater seems light

At the turn of this century, the Taye (pronounced "tie") company, which had been manufacturing drum parts for twenty-five years, decided to establish a line of drums under their own name. In a very smart move, they brought Ray Ayotte on board to help them with the design process. As many drummers know, Ray has been responsible for creative drum and hardware ideas for decades.

Taye states in their literature that they are "dedicated to making better drums." With new hardware innovations, a range of steel-shell snare drums, and kits that re-think tom sizes, they have a lot to offer.

Studio Maple Drums

The Studio Maple line is Taye's flagship series. The kit sent for review included an 18x22 bass drum, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, and a matching 6x14 wood snare. It also came with 5½x10 and 6x12 GoRack toms, which

were originally designed for Taye's compact GoKit. The drums were finished in a beautiful Golden Amber lacquer that highlighted the wood grain and created a warm, inviting appearance.

The Studio Maple drumshells are constructed of thin plies of North American sugar maple, and the drums we received were crafted to perfection. Toms up to 13" feature 6-ply shells, while toms 14" and larger (as well as bass drums) are 7-ply. The snare drum has a 10-ply shell. The shells are thin, strong, lightweight, and totally smooth inside and out. The 45° bearing edges have a slightly rounded top to meet the drumhead. Sound-wise, the shells facilitate low end, attack, and projection.

I must admit that on first sight I wasn't sure how the GoRack toms would work with the kit as a whole. When setting up, I immediately discovered that their shallow depth gave me the option of creating a more level playing surface across the drums than full-size toms would. This is significant not just for the playing surface, but because it opens up the area above the toms for easier access to cymbals and accessories. The big question, though, was how their reduced depths would blend with the full-size floor toms. To my delight, they blended beautifully.

Hardware Innovations

The mounting hardware on the Studio Pro kit offers some great innovations. The GoRack toms, supported by suspension rings, are easily positioned thanks to ball & socket tom holders. These, in turn, are attached to a post (which also accepts a cymbal holder) for vertical positioning. However, rather than piercing the bass drum shell, this post is affixed to Taye's Slide-Track mount. Mounted on the top of the bass drum, the Slide-Track allows the entire rack tom unit to move forward and backward in relation to the bass drum. Final positioning is easily locked in place with two turnkeys. This system combines with the other mounting hardware to allow infinite three-dimensional placement of the rack toms.

The bass drum itself is simply beautiful to look at, largely because the small lugs (which are used throughout the kit) don't obscure the drum's wood finish. A new design feature that isn't apparent at first is the clawhook, which is made up of two pieces. The tension rod slides first through a hard plastic component. The metal claw sits snugly over that plastic piece. On the drum, the plastic spacer sits on both the counterhoop and the fleshhoop. According to Ray Ayotte, this contact helps the counterhoop become part of the drum, and aids in creating a better sound. The effect of this design was noticeable when I tapped on the counterhoop. It sounded more like the drum and less like something separate.

Drumkit Sounds

All of the toms were outfitted with coated single-ply batter heads and clear resonant heads manufactured by Taye. The heads tuned up nicely to create a round, open, full sound. They responded exceptionally well to sticking at all dynamic levels, as well as to brush playing. The heads performed equally well at different tensions.

To be honest, while I found the timbre of the heads on the toms agreeable, I preferred the sound of some other heads that I tried for comparison. On the bass drum and snare drums, however, the Taye heads sounded excellent.

Speaking of the bass drum, its overall sound was phenomenal. The bass drum heads feature built-in dampening rings that focus the sound while leaving plenty of resonance. A deep, full, round boom follows a solid attack for an impressive sound.

Cracking rimshots on the matching maple snare drum seemed the perfect contrast to the bass drum. In fact, this drum's expressive performance, bright wood sound, and responsiveness at various head tensions would make it a great all-around snare. The Side Latch snare throw-off, which is a feature of all Taye snare drums, is quick and easy to use. It draws the snares into place evenly and effortlessly, and it maintains tension reliably. The 6x14 Studio Maple drum included with the kit is also available separately, as well as in 5" and 7" depths. A 5x13 model is also available.

Stainless Steel Snare Drums

In addition to wood snare drums, Taye also has a complete line of Stainless Steel snare drums. The 4x10 and 6x12 drums we were sent for review performed exceptionally well. The 12" drum sat comfortably in a snare basket, while the 10" was mounted with a suspension ring and a tom holder. The drums are constructed of 1 mm–thick stainless steel, polished to a mirror-like finish. Their bright, crackling, metallic sound is balanced with a warmth and roundness that allows them to mix nicely with other drums. Exceptional response at all dynamic levels added to their expression. And with the snares off, their ringing timbale-like sound was inspiring.

Taye's boom-style snare stand can be combined with ACS system like this cymbal boom arm to create unique set-ups.

Other ACS components can be combined to produce multiple-cymbal arrays.

Even a floor-tom leg can be the base for a cymbal boom arm.

Either of these steel drums would make an excellent auxiliary or primary snare. It was hard to pick a favorite, since the only difference was their overall pitch. But for my taste, the 10" was the best metal snare of that size that I've heard to date. When I tuned it up for a crisp, bright sound, playing on it was simply addicting. Taye's Stainless Steel snare drums are available in seven different sizes.

Stands And Pedals

The stands and pedals that Taye sent to accompany our review drums were excellent. The double-braced 6000 series hardware is well designed, functional, and user friendly. In addition, any hardware that comes in contact with the drums is designed to optimize their sound.

The hi-hat stand operated smoothly, while its rotating tripod made it easy to position. The chain-drive bass drum pedal—mounted on a baseplate for strength—was well balanced, with a quick response. The beater seemed light to me; I would have preferred a beater with a little more mass.

Straight, boom, and hide-away boom cymbal stands make use of a ball & socket design for the cymbal tilter, leading to fast and easy cymbal positioning. The snare stand also features a ball & socket design for the snare basket, which also made for easy positioning. But the snare stand has a more unusual feature: The basket is on the end of a boom arm, rather than a vertical down post.

This design offers all sorts of interesting positioning options. For example, the stand could be positioned with the tripod between two bass drums and the boom extending toward the player, thus clearing the floor beneath the drum for additional pedals. The boom stand could also be used to position an auxiliary snare up and over a hi-hat. Neat idea.

Most coverage of drumkit hardware would end there, but not with Taye's gear. Jokingly referring to their hardware system as "the jungle gym," Ray Ayotte and Taye have taken the concept of putting anything anywhere to a new level. Their "multi-clamping multi-booming" Accessory Clamp System (ACS) is highly functional, looks cool, and is loads of fun to use. For example, Taye offers hardware to build off the back end of a boom arm and go elsewhere. "Flying" a cymbal or percussion instrument off the top of a floor tom leg is possible, too. In fact, almost any piece of hardware on the kit can become a base from which other pieces can extend. Check out page 14 of Taye's pricing guide (on-line as a pdf file) at www.tayedrums.com to see just how creative you can get.

Conclusion

Ray Ayotte and Taye have come up with some excellent products and some neat innovations. From the warm open tones of their drums, to the seemingly limitless options provided by their hardware, Taye sparks a drummer's imagination in multiple ways. And, as an added bonus, Taye offers all these benefits at extremely attractive prices. If you're in the market for new gear, Taye should certainly be on your consideration list.

THE NUMBERS

Studio Maple kit, shell pack only $2,600
Studio Maple kit with hardware pack $2,895

(Hardware pack includes a snare stand, a hi-hat stand, a cymbal stand, a boom stand, and a bass drum pedal)

4x10 Stainless Steel snare $240
6x12 Stainless Steel snare $270

Individual Hardware Items

SS6000 snare stand $109
B6000BT boom snare stand $119
HH6000 hi-hat stand $139
PSK601C bass drum pedal $129
CS6300BT cymbal stand with ball tilter $109
BS6300BT boom stand with ball tilter $119
BS6300HBT hideaway boom stand $139
ACS-6C5S 3/4"-to-1/2" short swivel joint $45
ACS-55s 1/2" to1/2" short connector $30
ACS-6HRT 3/4" hideaway ratchet tilter $55
(909) 628-9589, www.tayedrums.com.

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Sabian Vault Artisan Rides

Striving For The Ultimate

by Paul Bielewicz

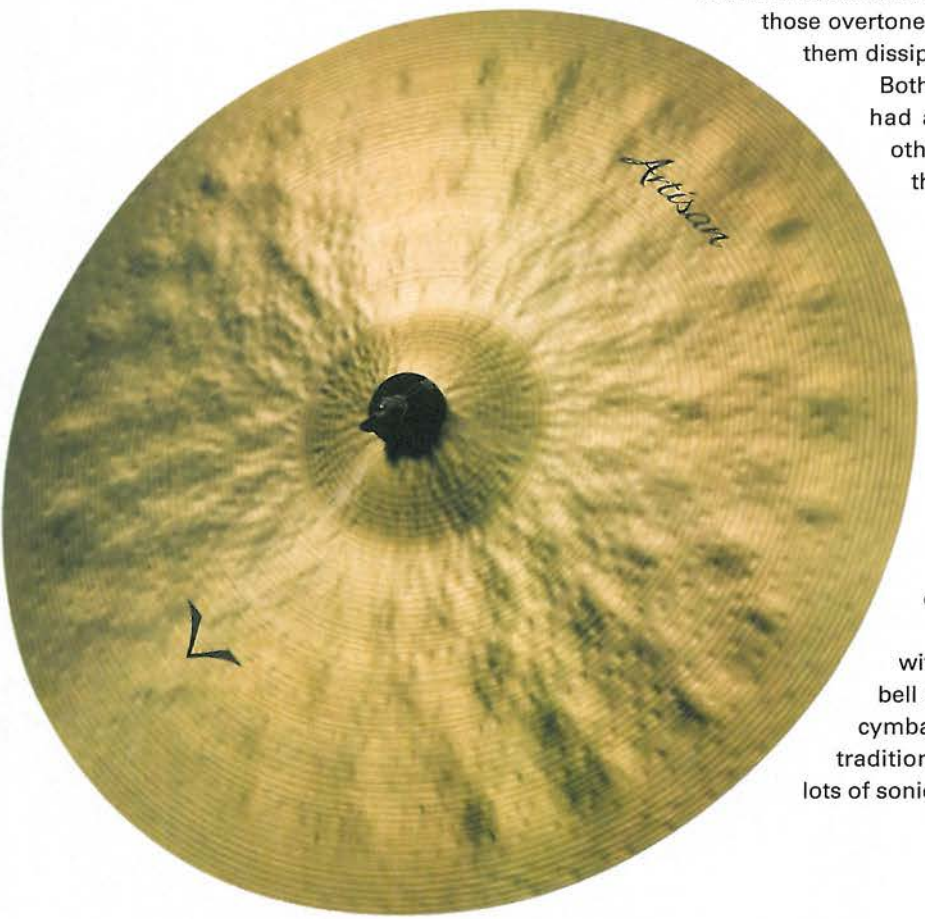
KEY NOTES

- large variation in tonal range and characteristics
- unusual "China-like" presence adds complexity
- relatively small bell size on 22" models made the bell difficult to play

From Sabian's Vault collection comes a line of rides dubbed "Artisan." According to the manufacturer, these "super premium" rides are hand-hammered using a centuries-old process involving a very dense hammering pattern. Sabian claims the result to be "the ultimate traditional cymbal." Because of the labor-intensive hammering process that only a few skilled artisans are entrusted to perform, Sabian will be offering these cymbals in limited numbers.

Artisan rides come in 20" and 22" sizes, and in light and medium weights. The hammering pattern is readily apparent to the eye. Seemingly random patterns of small and large impact marks cover the top and bottom of each cymbal. The lathe lines are nearly obscured by the large number of closely packed hammer marks.

The cymbals are offered in either traditional or brilliant finish. Our review set consisted of one representative cymbal in each size and weight, all in traditional finish. Let's take a look at each one.



20" Light

My first impression of the 20" light was of its thin feel while I played it. The cymbal almost seemed to conform to the stick. It didn't take much playing to build up overtones. (No one will mistake this cymbal for "dry.") Those overtones can almost be described as dissonant and "clangy," especially toward the edge. Sabian describes this sound as a "dirtied-up, dark-edged tone."

Although this cymbal was thin and dark, it still had a well-defined "ping" sound in the area halfway between the bell and the edge. But once those overtones I mentioned built up, it was difficult to make them dissipate.

Both the bell and body of the 20" light Artisan ride had a lower fundamental pitch than that of the other cymbals in our test group, due mainly to the thin nature of the cymbal.

Another characteristic of the 20" light ride (and, for that matter, *all* of the Artisans) is that its thinness gave it a great crash sound. In fact, when played as a crash, the 20" light took on an almost China-like feel with its dark sustain and overtones.

20" Medium

Although generally similar to the 20" light, the 20" medium was a little drier. Although some overtones were still apparent, they took longer to build up, and they didn't ring out as long.

The 20" medium had a very pronounced bell with a nice tone. When I started playing on the bell and then moved toward the outer edge of the cymbal, the sound again went from that of a very traditional jazz ride to almost China-like. There was lots of sonic variety within this one cymbal.

22" Light

The 22" light proved to be the least dry of the bunch. Overtones were readily apparent when the cymbal was played at any stick velocity. In addition, when I started at the bell and worked towards the outside edge, the overtones become more and more apparent. (Once again I eventually obtained the same "China-like" sound as on the other cymbals.)

I must say that the 22" light Artisan could become a big, explosive addition to a drummer's arsenal when played as a crash. In a very unscientific test I timed the ring-out of the 22" light at nearly forty seconds after being struck with moderate velocity. That's some great "hang-time."

22" Medium

In contrast to its lighter 22" sibling, the 22" medium was the driest of the bunch. In fact, this is the cymbal I'd say was least like its siblings in *most* respects. To begin with, it produced hardly any overtones at all—and those that it did were brighter and more traditional-sounding. And while the other Artisans all possessed at least some "China-like" qualities (dark, "dirty," and so forth), this ride did not.

One criticism I have for both 22" rides is that although the bells had a nice sound, they were a little too small to be played comfortably. Considering the large overall diameter of the cymbals, the ratio of "playable" bell surface to "non-bell" cymbal body was very small. And what little bell there was was nearly covered by the cymbal tilter's wing nut. This didn't make the bells on the 22" models *impossible* to play—just a little more difficult than what some will be used to.

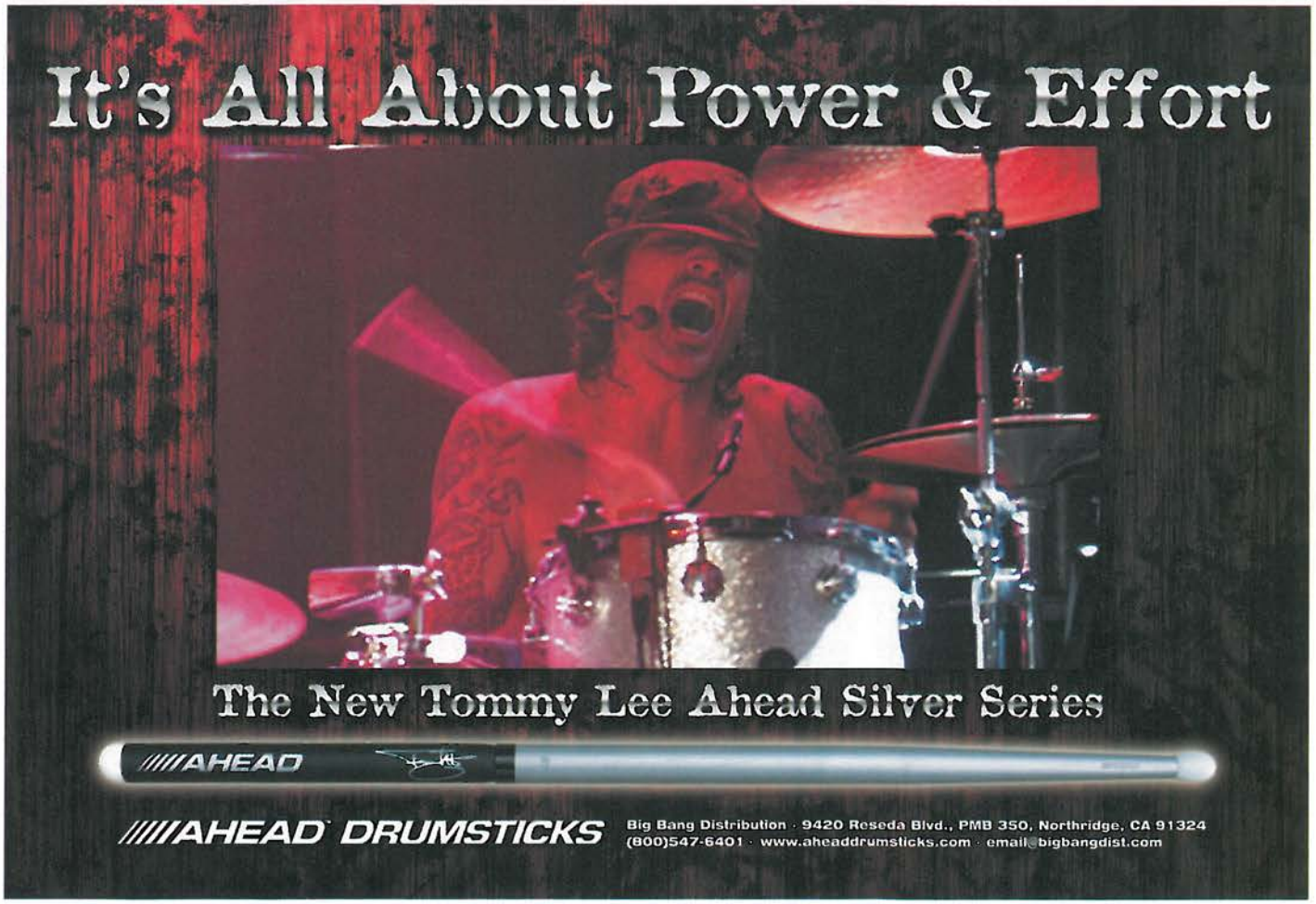
Pricing

Unlike Sabian's various "series" of cymbals, Vault is a "collection" that doesn't adhere to Sabian's "One Price Policy." Instead, each model will be priced according to a variety of criteria. The relatively high prices for the Vault Artisan rides are based on the labor-intensive hammering, shaping, and finishing processes used to make them. According to Sabian, their decision to opt for the super-premium route with the Artisan rides required much consideration. But they believe that drummers who hear the cymbals will agree that they're worth the investment.

Conclusions

Sabian's goal with the Artisan rides was to utilize centuries-old manufacturing techniques to achieve a unique combination of tradition and tonal complexity. The resulting cymbals offer a distinctive blend of dark overtones, explosive volume, and articulate playability. Are they the "ultimate" traditional rides? That's hard to say. But they definitely offer a well-defined balance of tradition and modern appeal.

THE NUMBERS
20" light or medium ride $600
22" light or medium ride $700
(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com.



Meinl Artist Series Luis Conte Signature Congas

As Talented As Their Namesake

by Norman Arnold

KEY NOTES
- warm, deep tonality
- great playing feel
- excellent for studio work
- priced affordably

Let's get right to the point: As befits their legendary namesake, Meinl's Luis Conte Signature congas are great-sounding drums. In particular, they have a natural, very *traditional* character. The world's drumming press has apparently recognized this character, because the Luis Conte congas received the Musikmesse International Press Award (MIPA) at the recent Frankfurt (Germany) Musik Messe.

The 11" quinto, 11¾" conga, and 12½" tumba are all 30" tall, and are made from two-ply rubberwood shells. They come in a natural finish and feature 8-mm tuning lugs attached to black matte metal lug plates. They also come with rubber Conga Savers that protect the drums from getting scratched. The bottom of each drum has a black rubber cap that's easy on hardwood floors yet makes the drums "grip" the floor and sit in place while being played.

The drums' True Skin buffalo heads are held and tuned by Meinl's TTR (Traditional Tuning) rims. The TTR is a narrow (4 mm) rim that pulls the head down and away from the drum. This traditional style is in contrast to the thicker and rounder "comfort-style" rims that have become popular in recent years. I actually prefer the TTR

rim because it sits considerably lower on the drum, out of the way of my playing. I'd rather have my hands spend more time with skin on skin than skin on metal, no matter how "comfortable" the rim is.

A Studio Sound

Our review drums showed up when I was in the middle of a recording session, so I decided to use them to record with. Right away I noticed how warm and beefy they sounded next to the congas I normally use. (And those drums don't suck!) The combination of the head choice, wood choice, and quality of construction give these drums a very rich tonality in the studio. That tonality makes the drums very easy to play.

Hand drumming requires a certain connection to the feel as well as the sound of the drums, and these were definitely on the warm and soft side. For studio congas, that's the *good* side. It really helps the player to get right into a groove. I didn't really have to play around too much and try to stretch the tuning of these drums, either. It seems they all have a very comfortable range that settles in very nicely in the lower, warmer regions.

Conclusion

For anyone who uses a set of bright-sounding fiberglass drums for live playing, the Luis Conte congas would be a great (and logical) purchase for studio work. And if this were a first set of congas, it would definitely be a set you would feel comfortable growing into and using in just about any situation. And what's even better, the prices for these drums are surprisingly reasonable, especially as compared to signature models from other brands. They're priced right for a great-sounding wood drum that is manufactured well.

THE NUMBERS

11" quinto **$340**
11¾" conga **$360**
12½" tumba **$380**
(615) 227-5090, www.meinlpercussion.com.

Quick Looks

Maestro Innovations Drum Tuner CD

Gord Honor is the owner and president of Maestro Innovations Inc., and a drummer with over twenty years of experience. He created the *Drum Tuner* CD in order to provide pitches for players to use as a reference during the tuning process.

Even though there are drum tuning videos on the market, Gord felt that it would be more helpful to put the information in a format that would be close to where the drums were. While some drummers might have a TV or VCR near their kits, most would not. They are, however, likely to have a stereo or portable CD player nearby.

The *Drum Tuner* CD was recorded with real drums in a studio setting, with no effects added to the drum sounds. The disc contains 32 tracks, the first of which gives instructions on how to use the tones, as well as how to listen to your drums so that you can tune them in relation to the attack and sustain. The following examples cover bass and snare drums, plus toms ranging in size from 10" to 16." They demonstrate low and high tunings, as well as tunings with both heads tuned the same and with the bottom head tuned higher than the top. You can also hear full drumsets with each of these tuning configurations. Enclosed instructions also provide tuning tips that include advice on checking bearing edges, breaking in new heads, and adjusting snares.

I found that I could use the CD to check my tuning "ear." I tried it with a 12x14 floor tom that I built a few years ago. I've never been completely happy with the sound, but I've also never taken the time to experiment with all possible tunings. As I played the *Drum Tuner* CD and compared the high and low tones to my drum, I discovered that I had tuned my tom to a high setting, though my desire had been to get a lower tone. I re-tuned the drum to match the recording, and the drum sounded huge.

Some drummers tune by starting with both heads slack, and then simply tighten the heads until the drum sounds good. This may work for them, but I don't possess the time or patience. Having reference pitches on the *Drum Tuner* CD helped to speed up the tuning process for me. I also gave the CD to some of my students to try, and they found it easy to use. They learned something about tuning, and I got to see how good their "ears" were.

I'm not saying that using the recordings on the *Drum Tuner* CD will automatically have your drums sounding great. They simply provide a point of reference with which to get your drums "in the ballpark." You can use the various tracks to put your kit into relative pitch intervals, and then work from there. Once you grasp the concept, you can find the tunings that make you and your drums the most happy.

Give the *Drum Tuner* CD a listen and a workout. I think you'll be surprised. I know I was. It lists for $9.99.

(416) 575-5950, www.drumtuner.com.

Chap Ostrander

Canopus Birch Drumkit

A Winner On The First Try

by Russ Barbone

KEY NOTES

- high-quality sound and construction
- striking appearance
- rack tom sizes seem sonically mismatched to the bass drum and floor tom

Canopus is a small but innovative Japanese drum company headed by designer and builder Shinichi Usuda. Although not widely recognized in the USA, they've been in operation for quite a while. I reviewed their ultra-compact Club Kit in the April 2004 issue of *MD*.

Canopus's manufacturing philosophy is to regard all of the parts used in drumkit construction as a total package. The size of the shell, the number of plies, the shape and angle of the bearing edge, the choice of lugs, and even the collar shape of the heads are all carefully chosen in order to get the most resonant performance out of each drum in the set.

A Birch First

The drumkit sent for this review is Canopus's first attempt at all-birch construction. The kit included a 16x20 bass drum, 8x10 and 8½x12 rack toms, a 15x16 floor tom with legs, and a 5½x14 snare drum. Overall construction was absolutely first-rate. The insides of the shells are left unfinished in terms of paints or sealants, but feature a sanding job as smooth as glass.

The set was wrapped in a lollipop-green serpentine swirl covering, reminiscent of late '60s/early '70s "psychedelic" finishes. For some reason, the snare drum's finish was a different shade: a more yellow-green that resembled the color of radiator coolant. Personally, I would have liked a matching snare, but this different look might appeal to younger drummers seeking an even more striking visual appearance.

Fittings And Features

The drums are fitted with round polished brass lugs that are mounted to the shell at only one attachment point. The 20-lug bass drum has no provision for tom mounts; the

Canopus sent this birch kit configuration (without the second floor tom and with an additional rack tom) for our review. The kit was finished in the Signal Green Ripple wrap shown on the snare drum at top right. The snare was finished in Signal Yellow Ripple, below right.

rack toms must be "flown" off a stand. Standard drumkey-operated tension rods secure the 1⅝" birch hoops. The batter-side hoop comes with a 2"-wide rubber pad at the pedal attachment point to prevent hoop gouge. (Nice!)

The bass drum is equipped with sturdy spurs with selectable rubber or spiked tips to eliminate "bass drum creep." A threaded collar locks down the tip adjustment.

The rack toms use twelve lugs (six top and bottom), and feature suspension rings for mounting purposes. The Pearl-style protrusion mounts attached to the suspension ring plates have captive plastic inserts that make getting the drums on and off their mounting arms a very easy process.

The snare drum features eight centrally mounted lugs and a solid, functional snare throw-off. The floor tom is fitted with substantial leg mounts that hold long, curved legs.

All of the tension rods on the kit have a feature that as far as I know is unique to Canopus: a stacked leather/metal/leather washer "sandwich" fitted between the head of each tension rod and the drum rim. This reduces the transfer of vibrations from the shell to the tension rods. The end result is that the rods hold their tuning over an extended period of time. (This is another nice Canopus touch that more manufacturers should consider using.)

Sound

The sound of this kit was excellent. Overall, it was a little sharper and a little more focused, and it had more projection than a comparable maple kit. The set also produced a much bigger sound than I expected from the sizes of the drums.

While all of the drums were very resonant and pleasing, I was particularly smitten by the snare drum's excellent, woody crack. I thoroughly enjoyed the sonic appeal offered by the birch shell.

One thing that struck me while I was playing the overall kit was that the small rack toms just didn't seem to blend smoothly with the bass drum and floor tom. A sonic hole was left when I rolled around the kit in one continuous motion. Some drummers might not mind this—or even perceive it the same way I did. But I honestly feel that Canopus should either increase the sizes of the rack toms, or reduce the sizes of the bass drum and floor tom. Of course, another (and perhaps simpler) option might be to include a third, larger rack tom that would bridge that sound gap.

Conclusion

Canopus is a small company making custom-quality drums in Japan. Not surprisingly, those drums come at custom-quality, imported-product prices. And at the moment they're only available at a limited number of dealers in the US. But Canopus is working on expanding that dealer network, and as they sell more drums, their pricing may come down. But even if it doesn't, I can honestly say that with Canopus drums, you get what you pay for.

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- Past President of Yamaha Drum Factory
- 2nd Generation Drum Maker; began relationship with Yamaha Drums

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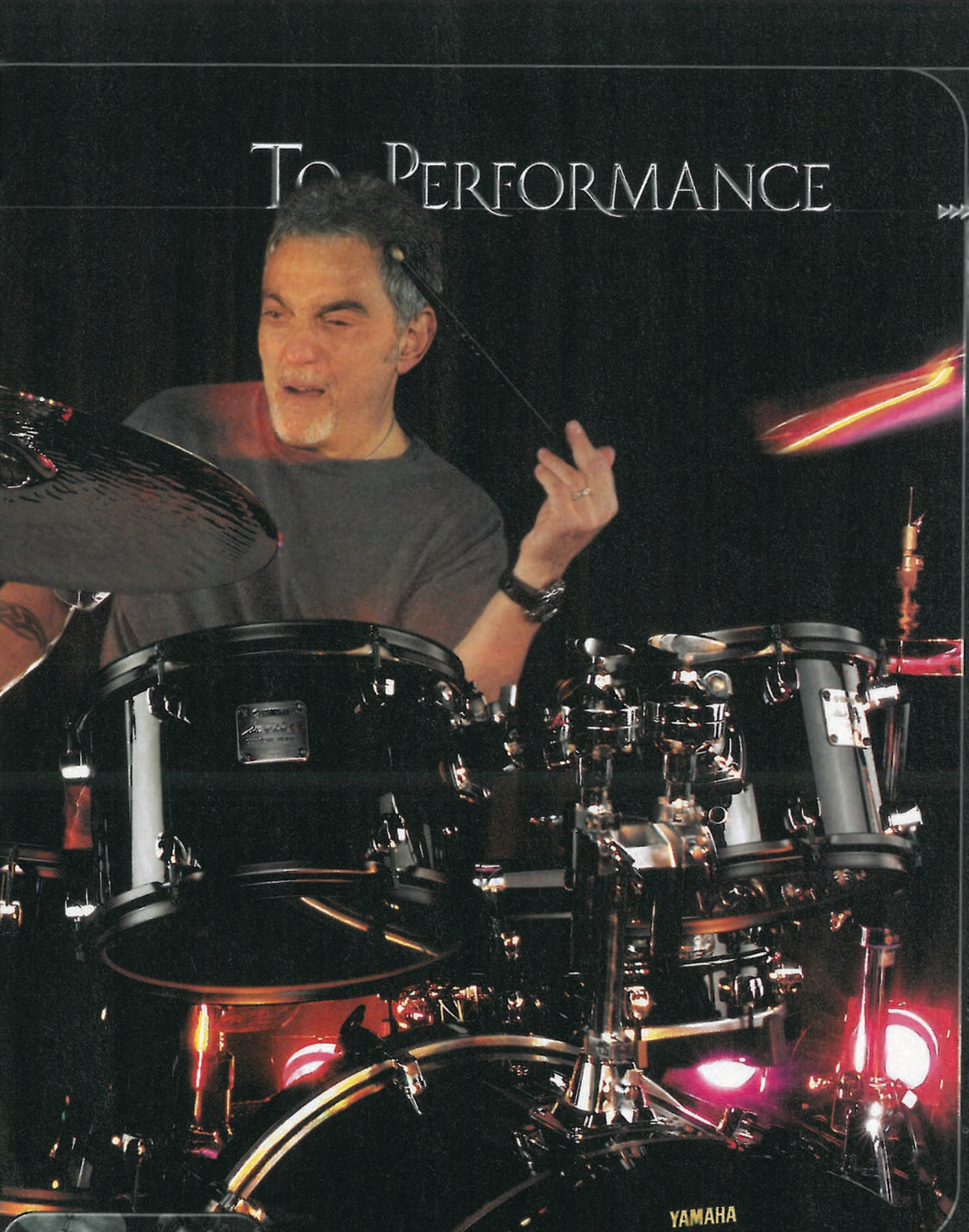

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American Idol's
Teddy

Campbell

Delivering The Message On TV

Story by Billy Amendola • Photos by Alex Solca

Out of all the reality TV shows on the air, *American Idol* has risen above and beyond to become a cultural phenomenon. In the few years the show has been on TV, it's practically taken over the entire music business, with the promise of making the winning contestants superstars. The live house band, directed by leader Rickey Minor and featuring drummer extraordinaire Teddy Campbell, plays a pivotal role in making the show one of the most entertaining and watched programs in TV history.

Teddy Campbell has been playing drums since he started naturally banging on his mom's pots and pans at the age of three. The drummer grew up in the Gospel music scene of Chicago, Illinois, played in church for the first time at the age of four, and hasn't looked back since. Since moving out to California almost nine years ago, Campbell, now thirty, has become one of the hardest-working drummers in the business. His résumé is so impressive that even *he* sometimes has a hard time believing how truly blessed he's been.

Campbell's work as musical director and drummer for 98 Degrees and Britney Spears (while both were at the peak of their careers) is just a tip of the iceberg. A few of his other credits include Deborah Cox, Kelly Price, Mary Mary, and Ann Nesby (formally of Sounds Of Blackness). Teddy has also recorded with Al Jarreau, Rod Stewart, Sisqo, Kirk Whalum, Paul Jackson Jr., and Kelly Clarkson. And he's toured with The Backstreet Boys, Christina Aguilera, Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, LSG (Gerald Levert, Keith Sweat, Johnny Gill), and Bette Midler. And the drummer has also done TV appearances with Ashanti, P-Diddy, Yolanda Adams, Shania Twain, Stevie Wonder, Mariah Carey, and Natalie Cole. And he's been the drummer in the house bands for *The Image Awards*, *The Essence Awards*, *The American Music Awards*, *The Billboard Awards*, *B.E.T.'s Celebration Of Gospel* (hosted by Steve Harvey), *VH1 Disco Ball*, *VH1 Diva's Concert*, and the *VH1 Save The Music Concert*.

Despite all of that work, Campbell still finds the time to stay true to his roots, fronting his own Gospel group, The Soul Seekers. "I'm the lead singer in the group, and Eric Seats is the drummer," Teddy explains. "I played drums on two of the studio tracks, 'What Would You Do' and 'He'll Make A Way.' We did most of the record live at drummer/producer Nisan Stewart's dad's church. Nisan's in the group as well—though he doesn't play, he sings."

MD caught up with Campbell just as this season of *American Idol* was wrapping up. This is his first major feature story, and it's well-deserved. Look out for this rising star. Next time you're watching TV and there's a house band, there's a good chance you'll see Teddy doing his thing.

MD: Let's start with *American Idol*. How did the gig come about?

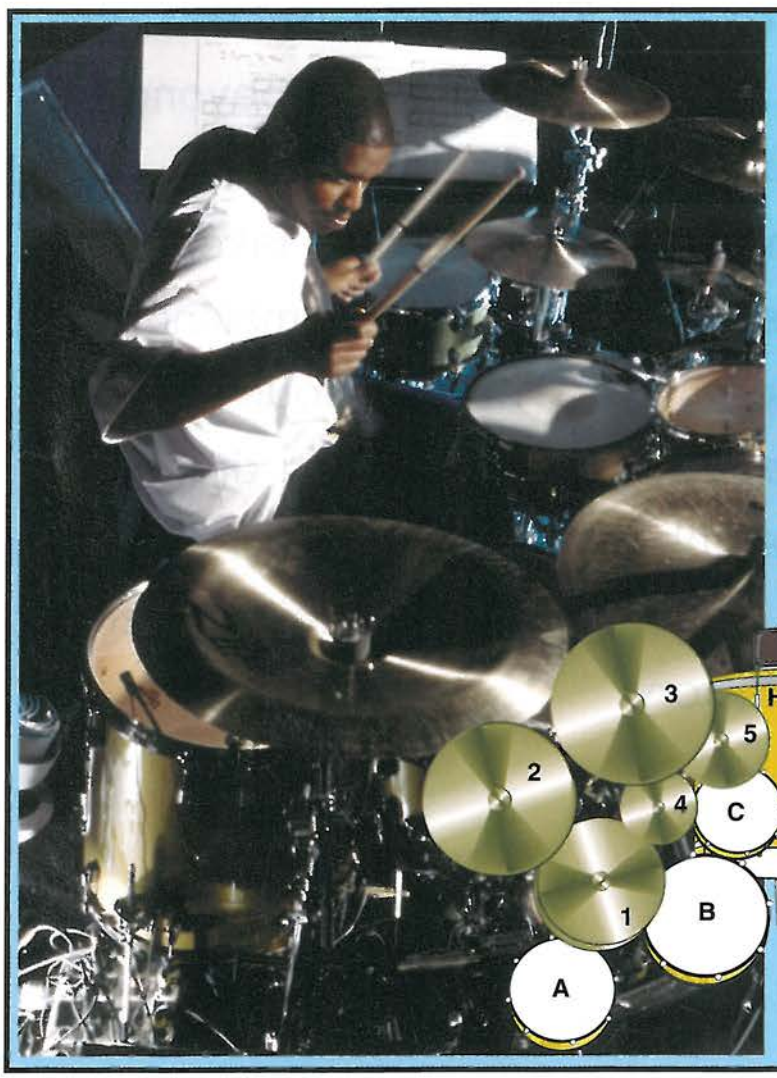
Teddy: I've been working with musical director Rickey Minor for a few years now on various TV shows. Rickey recommended me for the gig.

MD: What does the gig require? Are you reading charts?

Teddy: Oh, yeah. It's all charts.

MD: Is Rickey flexible? How close do you have to stay to the original recording?

Teddy: Rickey's very flexible with me. But he can be hard on anybody who sits in that seat—*anybody*. He doesn't care who it is. [laughs] We work well together and have been doing these types of shows for a while now. It's a very hard thing to do. You can't just come in, sit in the seat, and blaze. Rickey counts us down, and it's 4, 3, 2, 1...*go*. And we're live, so on top of reading the charts and listening to the cues, everything has to be on time and precise. Tempos have to be exact, and the songs can't run over a given time limit. If a song is supposed to be two minutes and twenty-



Campbell's Kit

Drums: Yamaha Absolute Birch Nouveau in Oriental Gold finish
- **A.** 6x12 snare
- **B.** 5½x14 snare (Paul Leim signature model)
- **C.** 7½x10 rack tom
- **D.** 8x12 rack tom
- **E.** 14x14 floor tom
- **F.** 16x16 floor tom
- **G.** 6x10 snare
- **H.** 18x22 kick drum (with Yamaha SKRM-100 SubKick)

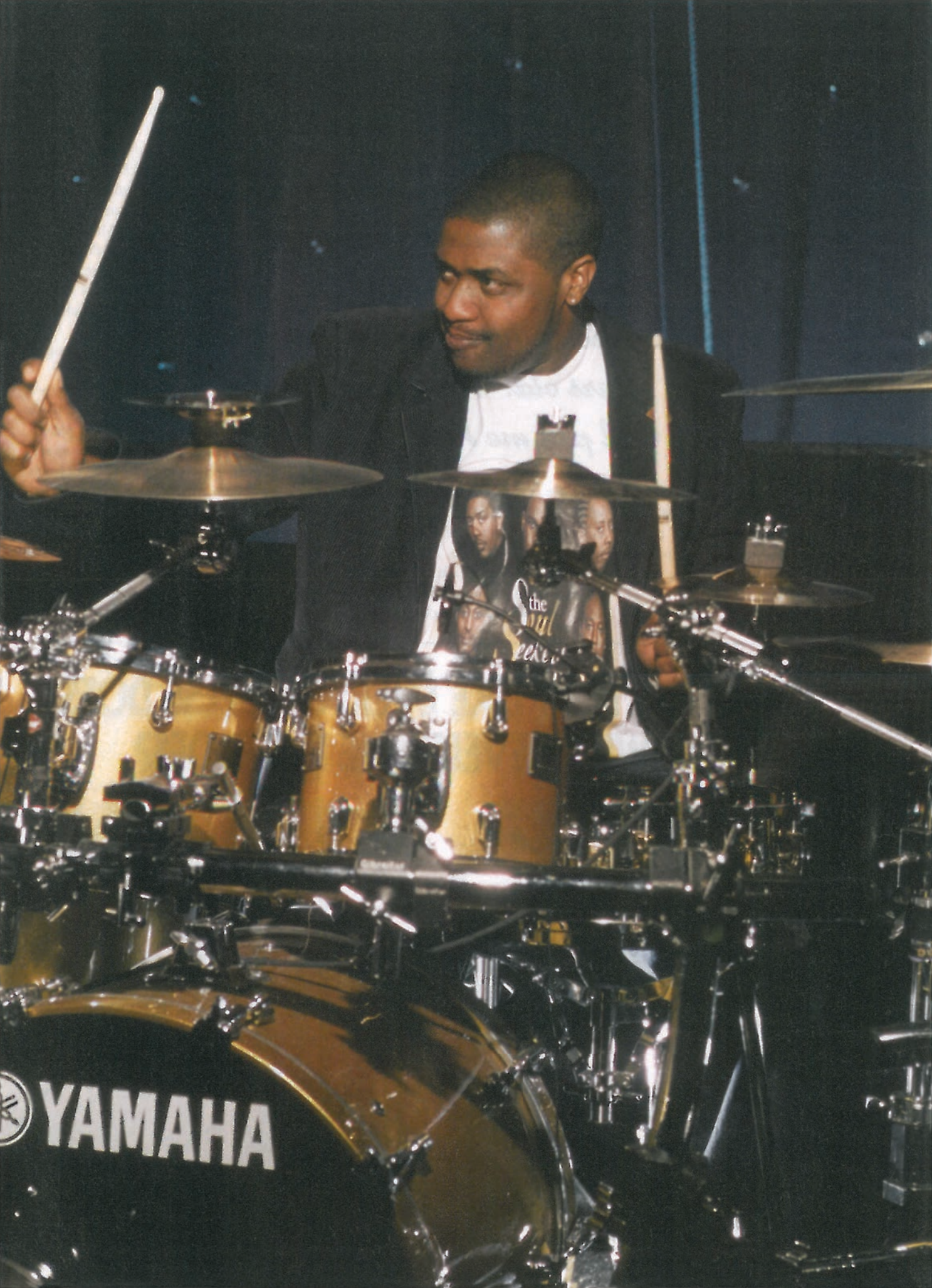
Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" A Mastersound hi-hats
2. 16" K Custom Session crash
3. 17" K Custom Dark crash
4. 8" A Custom splash
5. 10" A Extra-Thin splash
6. 6" A Custom splash (inverted) on top of 12" K Custom splash
7. 20" K Custom ride
8. 13" A Custom Mastersound hi-hats
9. 17" K Dark medium-thin crash
10. 16" Oriental China Trash

Percussion: Yamaha Russ Miller Groove Wedge, LP timbale bell

Hardware: Yamaha, including a DFP-9310 bass drum pedal (tight spring tension), Roc-N-Soc hydraulic throne, Gibraltar Super Rack System

Heads: Remo coated CS on snare drum batter with Diplomat snare-side, clear Emperors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors underneath, PowerStroke 3 on bass drum

Sticks: Pro-Mark SD9 (hickory with wood tip)


YAMAHA

five seconds, then it *has* to be two minutes and twenty-five seconds.

MD: Are you familiar with the tunes? Some of them date from before you were born.

Teddy: Oh yeah, a lot of them. [laughs] I was born in '75. But you know what? I grew up in church, playing strictly Gospel music. I think that's the best school ever, because not only does your pocket get strong in that setting, your awareness of what's going on *around* you improves, because you have to pay attention to so many things in church. You've got to watch the director. You've got to listen to the music, support the band and singers, and watch the preacher. It's not just showing up and playing. You have to be very attentive. And spiritually too, you've got to be in tune with what's happening. If the spirit is trying to move to a worship mode or to more praise and aggressive music, you've got to be able to switch over.

MD: So you're incorporating your church experience when you're playing the show? You make it sound like five different drummers playing because you're covering so many different genres.

Teddy: Well, thank you. Growing up, I only played Gospel music. But I was a fan of music, period. I *always* listened to a lot of music. From the time I was fourteen years old, I started getting into other types of music, and that's when I first heard players like Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, Will Kennedy, and Steve Gadd. Up until then, I only knew church music. Of course, I knew there was a whole other world of music out there, but I never needed it. When I got old enough to understand and be interested in other music, that's when I started finding out about different cats. From then on, I always listened to a lot of different music.

"I'm a drummer. I played my first song in church when I was four years old. That's what God put me here to do."

I listened to jazz and R&B. I was a '70s guru—I wanted to play everything from the '70s. I wish I had been around for that era. Oh, *man*. The Marvin Gaye stuff was so funky, the Parliament stuff, Earth, Wind & Fire, all the Motown stuff—which was a little earlier than the '70s. But all that stuff was so funky.

MD: Did you start playing along to those records?

Teddy: Oh, yeah. And when I *couldn't* play—because we were moving around to different places, going from a house to an apartment—I would just listen. I always had music in my head. And when I was living in a house, as soon as I got home from school, I didn't even do my homework. [laughs] I just got on the drums and played until my mom came home from work. I had about three hours a day to practice, blazing away to Dave Weckl, Vinnie

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Colaiuta, and Will Kennedy with The Yellowjackets.

MD: Did you also watch videos?

Teddy: No, I didn't watch a lot of videos. It was more just playing along with CDs, listening to the music, and getting on the drums and trying to do that stuff myself. I never got into videos.

MD: Are you self-taught?

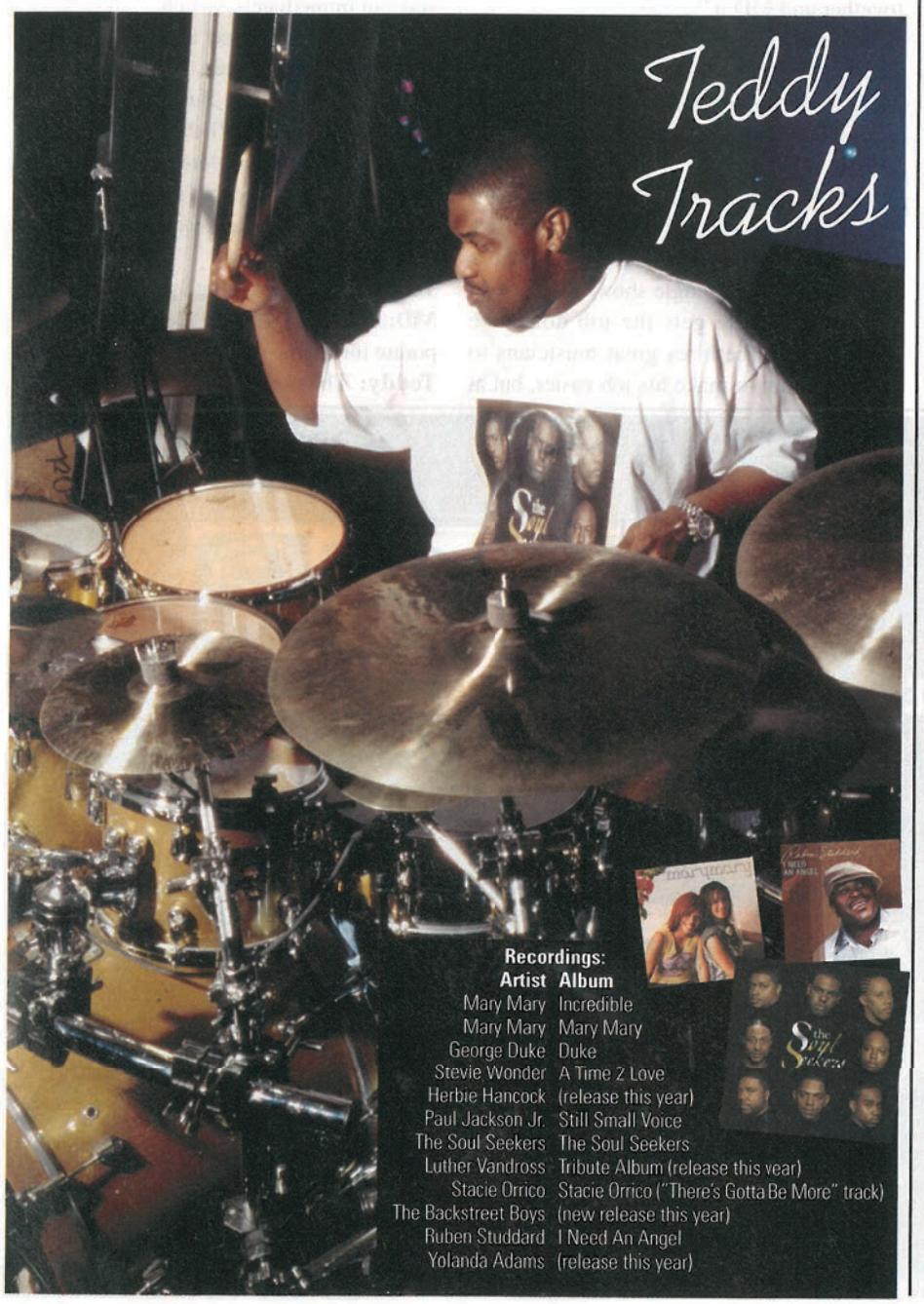
Teddy: Yes, completely. I played my first song in church when I was four years old. That's what God put me here to do, among other things. But I'm a drummer.

MD: Who taught you how to read charts?

Teddy: Well, that came from on-the-job training.

MD: In church?

Teddy: No, we never had charts in church. After living in LA for three years, I met Rickey Minor through Wayne Linsey while I was doing the Frankie Beverly & Maze gig. Rickey was the musical director for Whitney Houston, and he was also doing *Motown Live*. So Wayne introduced me to him. I don't know if Rickey had heard a tape or saw a show, but he knew I could play, so he hired me. When I got to rehearsal, it was *all* charts. And I didn't tell him at the time that I couldn't read. I didn't say anything. But my ears were good from



Recordings:

Artist	Album
Mary Mary	Incredible
Mary Mary	Mary Mary
George Duke	Duke
Stevie Wonder	A Time 2 Love
Herbie Hancock	(release this year)
Paul Jackson Jr.	Still Small Voice
The Soul Seekers	The Soul Seekers
Luther Vandross	Tribute Album (release this year)
Stacie Orrico	Stacie Orrico ("There's Gotta Be More" track)
The Backstreet Boys	(new release this year)
Ruben Studdard	I Need An Angel
Yolanda Adams	(release this year)

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all of the experience I had playing in church. I can hear a song once and play it.

When I first started playing with Rickey, I didn't think he realized I wasn't reading. But after a while he knew and he came to me and said, "Man, I know you can't read. But I like the way you feel and I like what you do. So when the charts show up, follow them as much as you can. Use your ears and do what you do." So, that's what I did. And after a while, I started seeing the charts so much—all of the symbols and signs—that everything became familiar. Of course, it's been a few years, so if you put a chart in front of me now, I'm straight. [laughs]

MD: Rickey gave you a break. Did you find work as soon as you came out to California?

Teddy: I went on the road immediately with LSG [Gerald Levert, Keith Sweat, Johnny Gill]. And then I started with a band called Dakota Moon, who I went out of the country with a lot. And then I did Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, and Christina Aguilera was around that same time. I met Rickey right after that.

MD: And then you became musical director?

Teddy: Rickey put me on as musical director for 98 Degrees. And then I did The Backstreet Boys. I wasn't an MD for The Backstreet Boys, but after I started doing that kind of work, I started putting bands together for Deborah Cox, Kelly Price, and Mary Mary. By the way, one half of Mary Mary is my wife, Tina. Then we did Britney Spears, and Rickey made me MD for her.

MD: Was Rickey playing bass on these gigs?

Teddy: No, he wasn't out at all. He was contracting. He was like, "Put this band together and MD it."

MD: Another great break.

Teddy: Oh, yeah.

MD: Well, obviously, he believed in you and you proved to him that you can do the job.

Teddy: Yeah, but I was nervous, because I heard a lot about Rickey's reputation. He's a no-nonsense kind of dude. And that's why he's on every single show in the world on television. He gets the job done. We have fun, and he hires great musicians to play with him to make his job easier, but at the same time it's a job. We work. When it's time to be there, we're there. We have a schedule and we keep it. It's a very professional situation. You have to be ready for the challenge. I've sent a few drummers in to sub for me, and they're all great players, but some couldn't handle the pressure.

MD: It's not as easy as it looks.

Teddy: I'm telling you—the tempos of the songs are critical, and the songs are coming so fast. We'll jump from an R&B, hip-hop kind of blazing mode right into a country, rock, or pop tune. We'll go from something very heavy to a lighter ballad. You have to be fluent in the different styles of music so you can immediately switch.

MD: And it's a mindset also.

Teddy: Yes, it is. I mean, I have what I think are my strong points. But at the same time you've got to play all the other stuff like you've been playing it forever, because that's what is required. And that's the hard part.

MD: Did you listen to rock music growing up?

Teddy: No, not growing up. Why?

MD: Because I like the feel that you incorporate into some of the rock stuff.

Teddy: Thank you. Whatever you play,

you've got to make it feel good. I'm only going to be who I am. I'm a funky, groovy kind of drummer. That's really what I do. But knowing that, making the switch over to rock, you just can't help but incorporate your feel and your style. That's just how I interpret other music; it's got to have a groove. It's got to have some kind of backbeat to it.

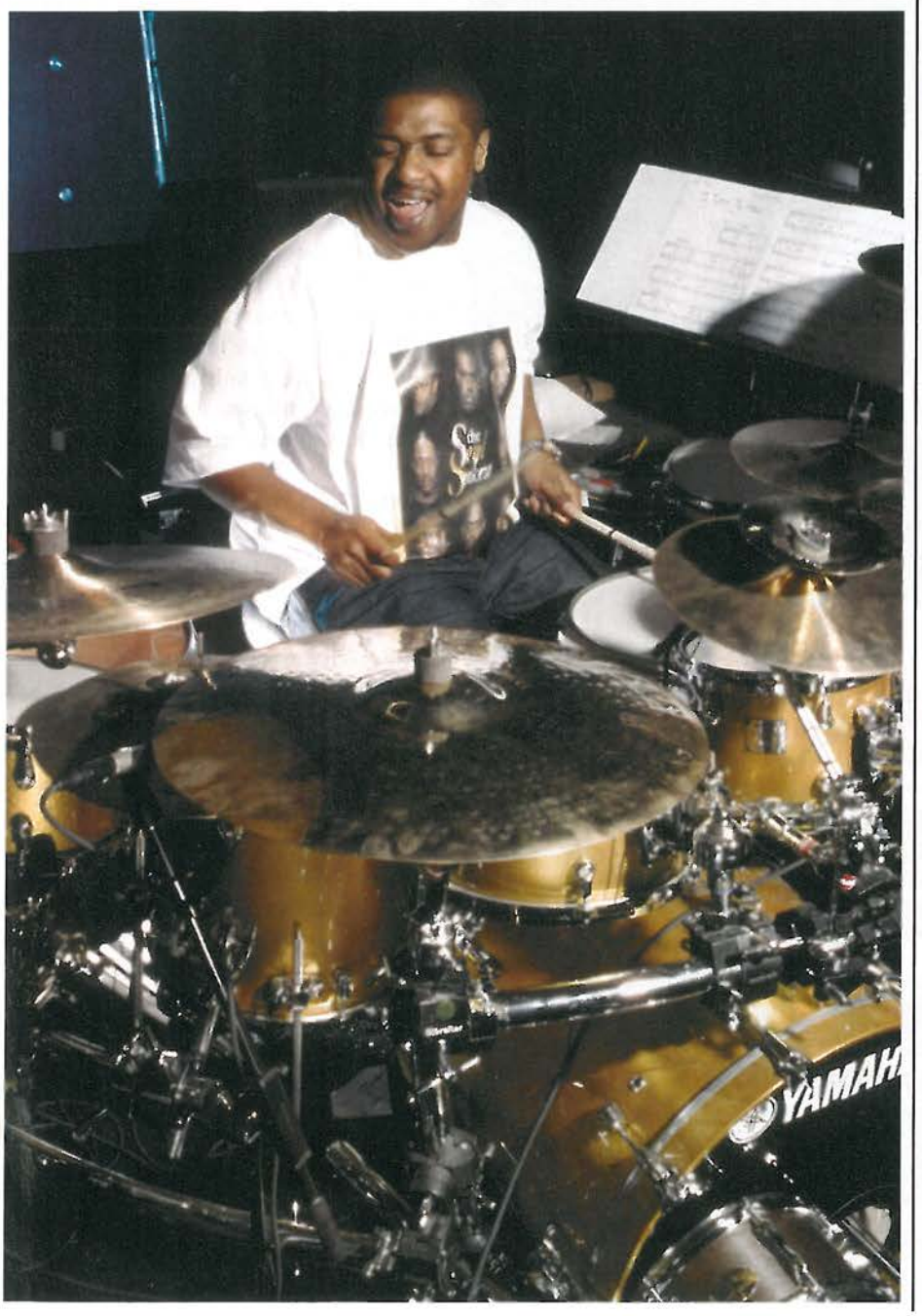
MD: Getting back to *American Idol*, what is a typical day on the set like?

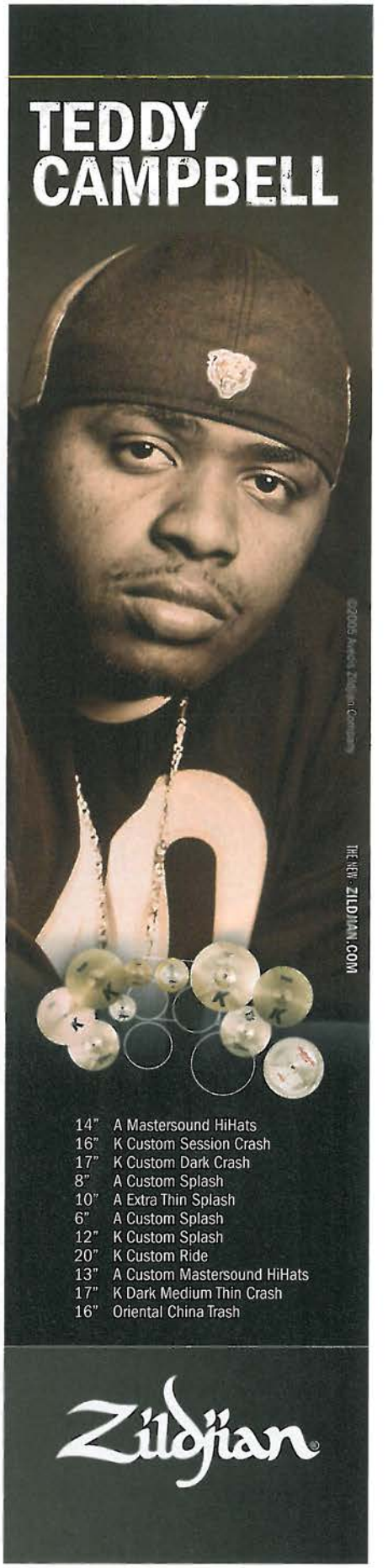
Teddy: I'm there Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. On Mondays I arrive at 8:30 A.M. to rehearse with the band until about noon. Then the singers come after lunch and we'll rehearse a couple of times with each.

MD: Do you ever go back and refer to the original recording of the song?

Teddy: Oh, yeah, definitely. I want to be as close to the style and feel of the original as I can possibly be. I can read the chart, but before I started reading I was all ears, so that's how I want to learn the song. I want to listen to it and learn it that way. I want to get the feel of it. Then the chart is just a reference point.

We finish up on Monday by about 5:00 P.M. On Tuesdays, we come in around 10:30 A.M. and we do a camera block with





the contestants.

MD: Can you explain what that is?

Teddy: A camera block is when we do the song on camera so that the camera angles can be adjusted.

MD: So they actually tape it?

Teddy: Yes. They tape it so the director can see where he wants the singers to stand and how they'll look on camera with the lighting—that sort of thing. We do that, take a break for lunch, and then come back to do a run-through of the entire show with a small audience, just like we're going to do it live that night.

MD: Like a dress rehearsal?

Teddy: Exactly. And then on Wednesdays, we come in about 2:00 in the afternoon and learn the group song. Then we break and go live that night.

MD: How's the vibe behind the scenes?

Teddy: It's good. We have fun. Simon Fuller, who owns the show, talked to Rickey yesterday and said, "Just tell me now that you're coming back next season." So it looks like we'll be back again next year. And I'm cool with the producers—we have a really good relationship. I really think they like what we do.

MD: While you're not on camera a lot, it sounds as if you're hitting the drums hard.

Teddy: Oh yeah, I'm banging the crap out of them. [laughs] I'm smacking them. I'm not letting up at all.

MD: Do you tailor your sound for a TV mix? Do you use certain gear to accommodate that setting?

Teddy: I do switch things out, but not my drums. For instance, yesterday I didn't use my side 12" snare. I had a Roland V-Drum pad triggering an 808 snare sound on my SPD-20. So I'll do that kind of thing. On the day we did the show tunes, I switched out a couple of cymbals. I added two ride cymbals to better match the music.

MD: Is that specifically for the TV sound, the song, or both?

Teddy: Both. The particular style of the song will require me to use different things—electronics, a ride cymbal, a cymbal with rivets...whatever. I change it up. But I definitely leave the drums alone; I don't change the drums.

MD: Let's go back to the beginning. Did anybody in your family play drums?

Teddy: My father was a percussionist.

MD: Do you have memories of him playing?

Teddy: No, because I just grew up with my mom.

MD: When you started to get serious about playing, who was the first person that made you say, "Man, that cat's good?"

Teddy: That would be Oscar Seaton, who plays with Lionel Richie now. I first saw Oscar play in church. He's from Chicago, too. He used to play with a choir in Chicago called The Soul Children Of Chicago.

There were a couple of different church drummers that I liked listening to. One was Dana Davis, who used to play with The Winans. Another was Joel Smith, who played with The Hawkins. Those were the Gospel drummers that I listened to that influenced me on the Gospel side.

When I was introduced to the other styles of music, it was Will Kennedy and The Yellowjackets who *really* got me into jazz. That's who did it for me, because their music was musical. It was jazz, and at the same time it reminded me of Gospel music. It was so melodic that it almost sounded like praise and worship music. That's what I

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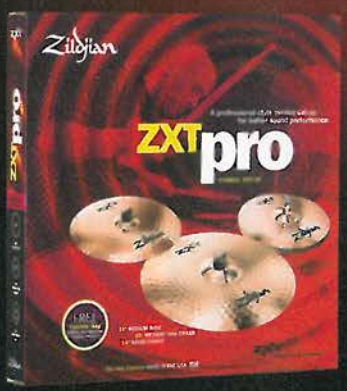

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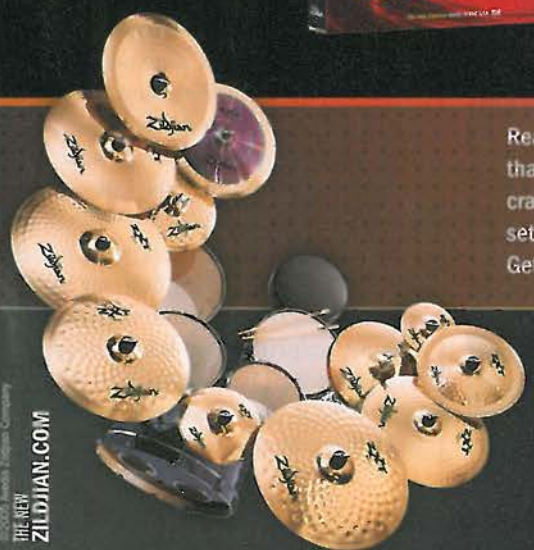

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Teddy Campbell

liked about it.

MD: From listening to you play on *American Idol*, it sounds like you have a lot of technique. Do you practice? And if so, what do you practice?

Teddy: I do practice, but I don't get the chance to as much now because I have a small child, and I'm always doing some kind of session or some kind of show. When I'm at home, I spend time with my little one and my eleven-year-old daughter. They require a lot of attention.

What I try to do, which I've found to really help my playing, is to listen to a lot of different music. I'm constantly listening to different things. I've got my iPod in the car. Plus you don't *always* want to be playing. You want to give yourself a break, you know?

MD: Is there anything you feel that you'd like to work on?

Teddy: I've been doing some salsa gigs here and there, and I'd like to get my salsa tighter. My favorite salsa band right now is Guaco.

MD: You find that challenging to play?

Teddy: Yes. My favorite drummer right now for salsa is Jimmy Branly.

MD: How would you describe your playing?

Teddy: I would call it "churchy," with a raw overtone—and funky. I'm most comfortable playing grooves. And I'm always comfortable playing in church. That's my life. That's where it started and that's where it's going to end up. Everything else is just a blessing to be able to play. It's a blessing because a lot of people can't make that switch. It's not easy. And when the real cats who play whatever that style of music is, you want them to say, "Alright, man, you sounded good." You definitely want that validation.

MD: You want to sound authentic.

Teddy: Right. I don't want to sound like a church drummer playing salsa. I don't want to sound like a church drummer playing rock, pop, or jazz. I want to be a church drummer who can play the other stuff just as well.

Speaking of drummers who got their start in the church, right now, on the scene today, it's Gospel drummers doing the playing, particularly on R&B and pop gigs. Everybody that you can think of that's on a pop or R&B gig—Keith Harris with Black Eyed Peas, Paul John Jr. with Alicia Keys,

Aaron Spears with Usher, Gerald Heyward on the Rob Thomas solo CD—all come from a Gospel background.

MD: What's coming up in the future for you?

Teddy: A few things. But the thing I'm most excited about is touring with my group, The Soul Seekers.

MD: Any words of advice for drummers wanting to follow in your footsteps?

Teddy: I would say practice makes perfect in any situation. And you should definitely keep your ears open and listen to music. You don't have to practice on the drums all the time to get good. If there's no way you can sit down at a kit and play, you have to be able to just listen to music.

I also think it's very important to be versatile, because if you're going to be a drummer, you want to be a full and complete drummer. You don't just want to be the greatest hip-hop drummer or the greatest rock drummer. I know I don't. If I'm going to be a professional drummer, I want to be a *professional drummer*. I want to be able to play anything.

Some of the older guys who aren't working as much any more aren't doing so because they didn't make the shift. They didn't make the change from the funk stuff to the contemporary side and what people want to hear now. You've got to be able to make the switch, no matter how old you are. Your pride can't get in the way.

Look at Vinnie Colaiuta. He can play anything. That's what I want to be able to do. I heard Vinnie on a Vanessa Brown record, and the music was kind of poppy and kind of funky. This cat was *playing*—I could have sworn he was a church player because of the way he made it feel.

MD: How would a church player sound?

Teddy: Everything just has more of a bounce to it. And you can't teach that, because I think it comes from the heart. It's a feeling—it's how *you* interpret it.

MD: It's not only physical, it's spiritual.

Teddy: Oh, yeah. Music can minister in a way that somebody just talking to you can't. But it has to be pure, it has to be right. I hear a lot of testimony from people saying that music saved their lives, and that there was a song that brought them to their knees to say, "Lord, I'm sorry." It's important. Music is very important.

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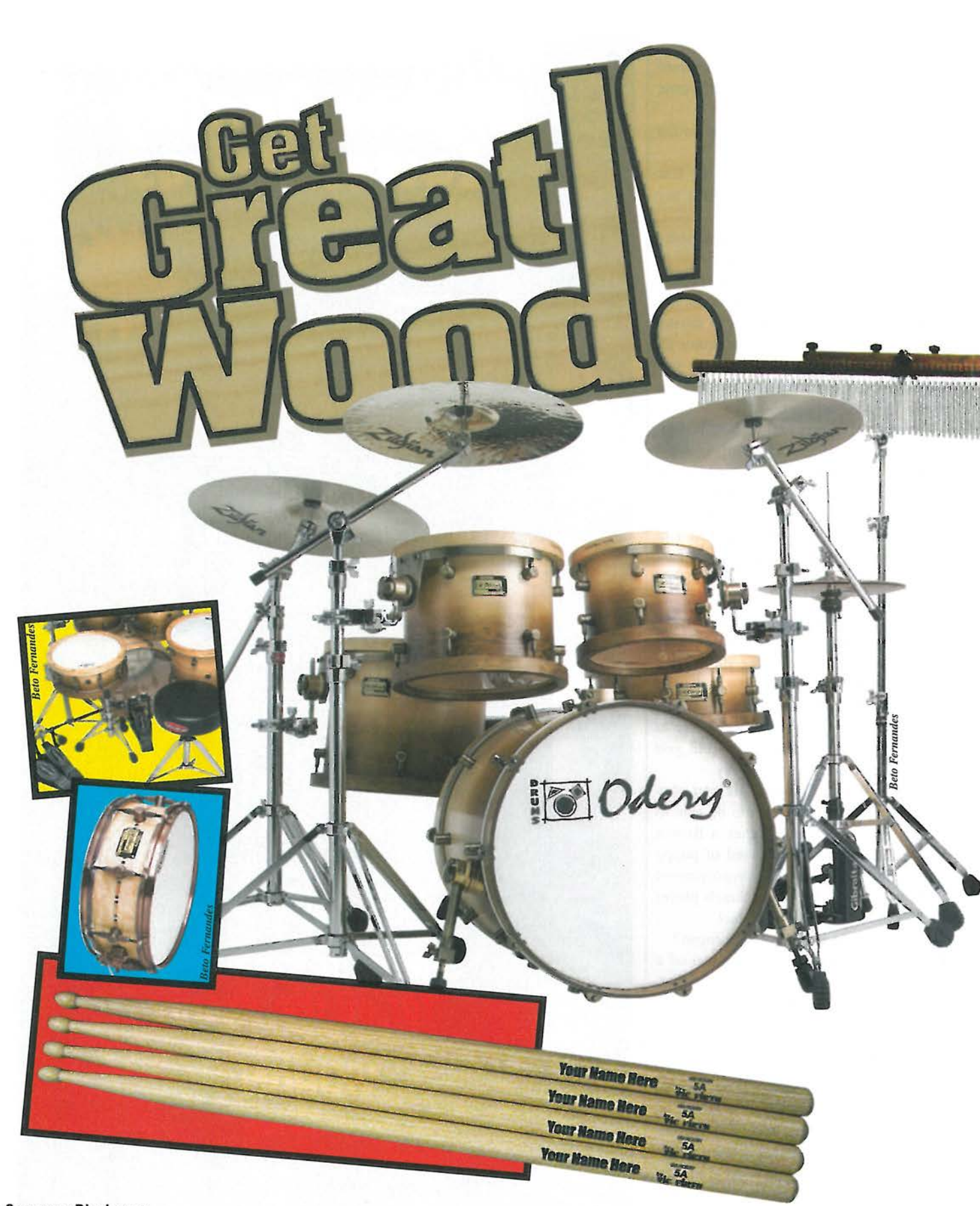

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receive an Odery five-piece, wood-hoop, araucaria drumset, Zildjian K Custom cymbals including one (1) pair 13" K Custom hi-hats, one (1) 16" K Custom Fast crash, one (1) 18" K Custom Fast crash, and one (1) 20" K Custom ride, Gibraltar hardware, one (1) TreeWorks InfiniTree, three (3) dozen pairs of Vic Firth Player's Label drumsticks with the winner's name imprinted on each stick and one (1) T-shirt, and a set of Evans drumheads. Approximate retail value: $9,650. Second prize: One (1) Odery $5\frac{1}{2}$x14 snare with brushed copper hardware finish, two (2) dozen pairs of Vic Firth Player's Label drumsticks with winner's name imprinted on each stick, and one (1) Vic Firth T-shirt. Approximate retail value: $1,290. Third prize: one (1) dozen pairs of Vic Firth Player's Label drumsticks with winner's name imprinted on each stick, and one (1) Vic Firth T-shirt. Approximate retail price: $160. 11. Approximate retail value of contest: $11,100. 12. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 13. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or a winners list, write to Modern Drummer Publications/Odery/Zildjian Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

MASTODON'S BRANN DAILOR

THE NEW FACE OF PROG?

Story by Jeff Perlah • Photos by Paul La Raia

For Mastodon drummer Brann Dailor, playing in a band named after a huge prehistoric beast makes perfect sense. "When I'm performing or writing," Dailor says, "I sometimes think, That definitely sounds like a Mastodon part." Well, how about a "Sea Salt Mastodon" part? On their most recent album, *Leviathan*, the Atlanta band carves out a monstrous metal/prog song-cycle based on Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. (Melville does call his white whale a Sea Salt Mastodon. "A sign from God!" Dailor beams.)

And as the band's crushing riffs, brutal vocals, and prog nuances burn bright, Dailor's drumming remains thunderous, dynamic, and impressive. On "Megalodon," he navigates through an ocean of "totally crazy" riffs (even a cool country lick) while casting all sorts of artful, out-front complexities. "That one was definitely a big job drumming-wise," he admits, "especially since the guitars fit together in such an unorthodox way."

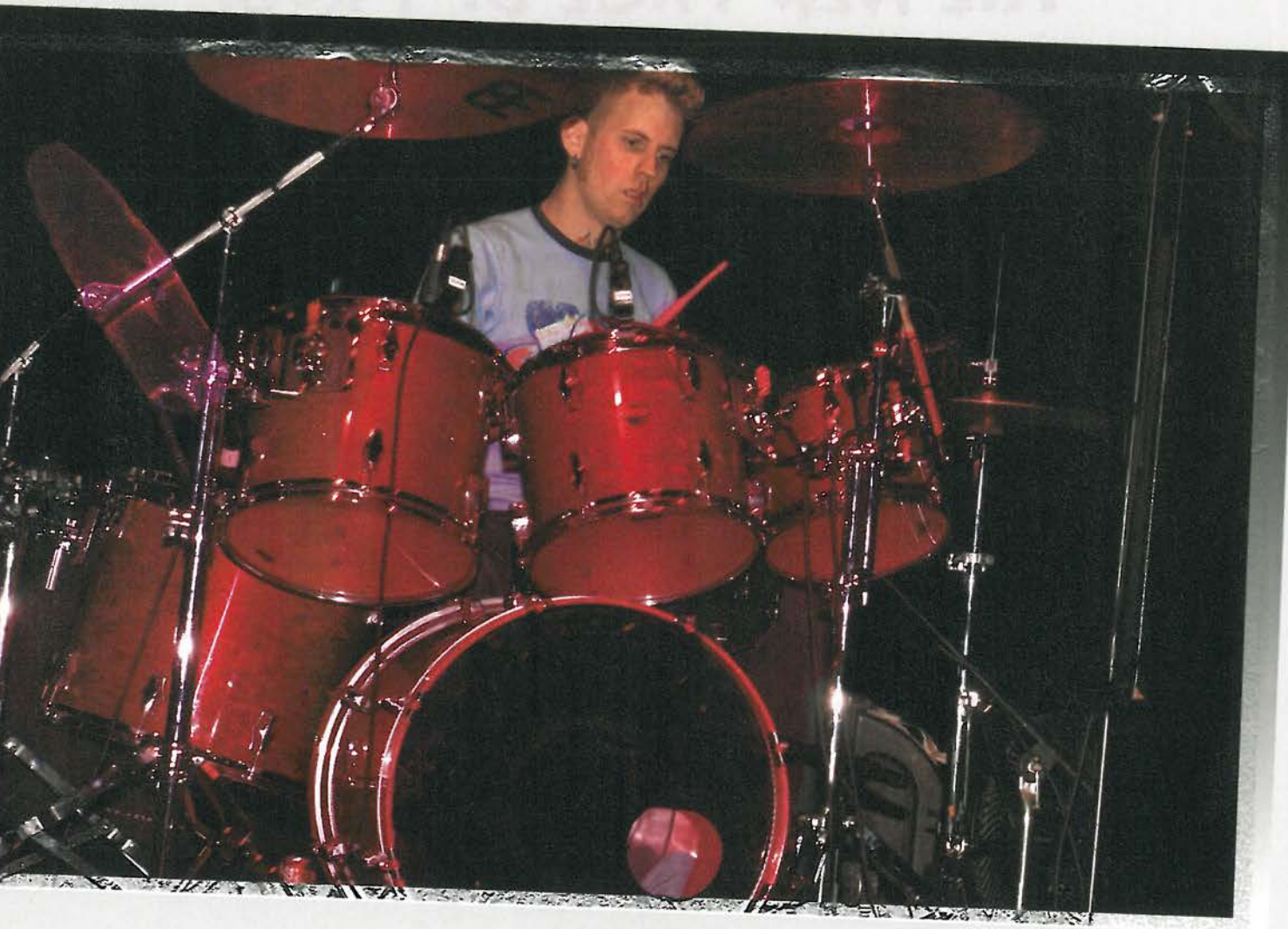
As busy as his drumming gets on *Leviathan*, Dailor does show a bit of restraint on certain songs. "I would lie awake at night wondering whether or not I was playing enough for some of the songs," he confesses. "But I realized if I could go further, I would have. That said, I wouldn't let my ego interfere with a song being great. A lot of them needed more time to breathe and needed me to play straight, solid beats."

One such track was opener "Blood And Thunder." (Dailor wrote the tune, reeling the title right out of *Moby Dick*.) "I gave that song some meat and potatoes from the drums." It seems that now, the drummer enjoys playing simply as well as in an over-the-top manner. (For fans of notes and aggression—and to hear a more unhinged version of Dailor—check out the band's sprawling first album, 2002's *Remission*.)

Dailor not only wrote some of the music on the critically acclaimed *Leviathan*, but he conceived the album's whole concept. The drummer read Melville's masterpiece while traveling to London from Hawaii, where he spent his honeymoon. The parallels between the novel and the story of his own band made him "delirious." "It seemed to fit with what we were doing as a group," Dailor explains. "We were like sailors as we drove around and played basements and clubs for years. We were on a quest for something that might not even be there, and we were sacrificing a lot by leaving our families and friends behind. It was a mixture of Ahab's craziness and Ishmael's lust for life and adventure."

Overall, Dailor feels that Mastodon's music would sink fast "if it didn't cause us to have the hair stand up on the backs of our necks. We all need to go to that 'other place' when we perform. For me, I can compare it to a runner's high. It's an endorphin rush to play our music, especially on the drums. It's a workout. My blood starts boiling and my heart starts pounding when I enter that place. You really need to reach down deep to pull that stuff out. Obviously everyone has their crosses to bear, as do we, but it's great when you're able to express things, maybe horrible things, pull 'em out, and leave 'em on the stage."

Dailor has been pulling things out with extreme music for years. After exiting the tinnitus-inducing noise-core outfit Today Is The Day, he and his friend

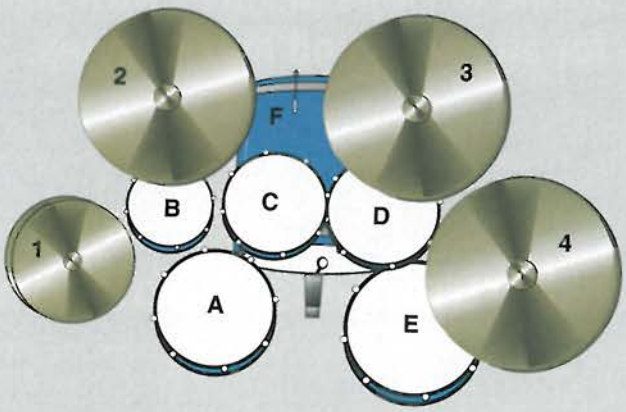


Bill Kelliher (also in TITD) ditched the chilly climate of Rochester, New York and migrated to Atlanta. Within weeks they met guitarist/singer Brent Hinds and bassist/singer Troy Sanders, and Mastodon was born.

The band's debut EP, 2001's *Lifesblood*, is a gritty yet striking blueprint of what was to come. "We were getting to know each other on that record," Dailor recalls. "Since we recorded very early on and didn't cook it too long, the disc really shows us at the very beginning. It was after that when we started touring and sharing ideas."

Dailor's ideas, especially when it comes to drumming, stem from a massive array of influences. While growing up in Rochester, he was "a human sponge." At home, he enjoyed a steady diet of prog rock. "My mom and dad would listen constantly to Yes, King Crimson, Genesis, and Frank Zappa," he recalls. "I also got into Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, and Slayer. I never lost that interest in heavy metal."

Drums: Tama Starclassic in Titanium Fade finish
- **A.** 5x14 brass snare
- **B.** 8x10 rack tom
- **C.** 9x12 rack tom
- **D.** 10x13 rack tom
- **E.** 16x16 floor tom
- **F.** 18x22 kick drum

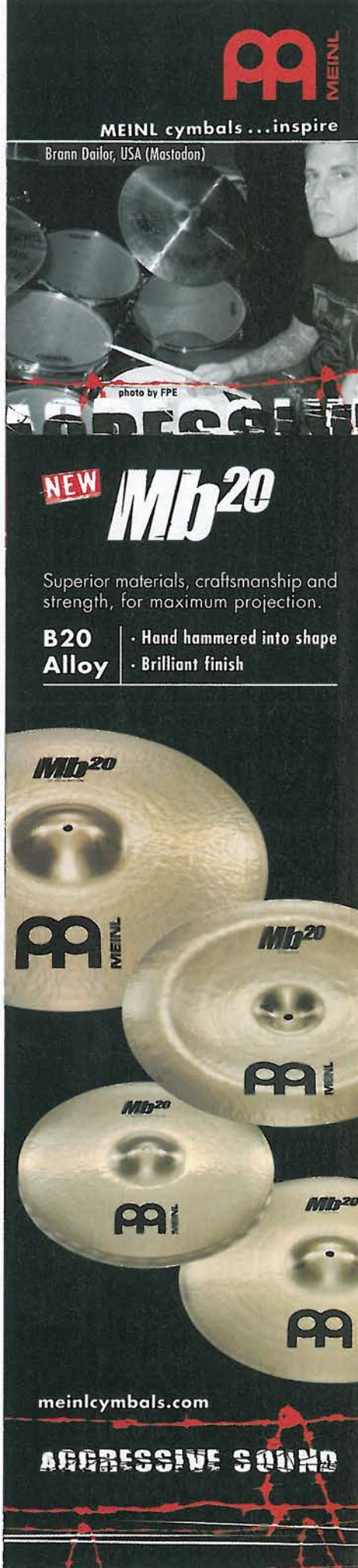


Cymbals: Meinl
1. 14" Byzance hi-hats
2. 19" Soundcaster Power crash
3. 20" Raker medium ride
4. 21" Classics Power ride

Hardware: Tama

Heads: Evans coated Power Center on snare, G2s on toms and bass drum batter

Sticks: Vater 5B (hickory with wood tip)



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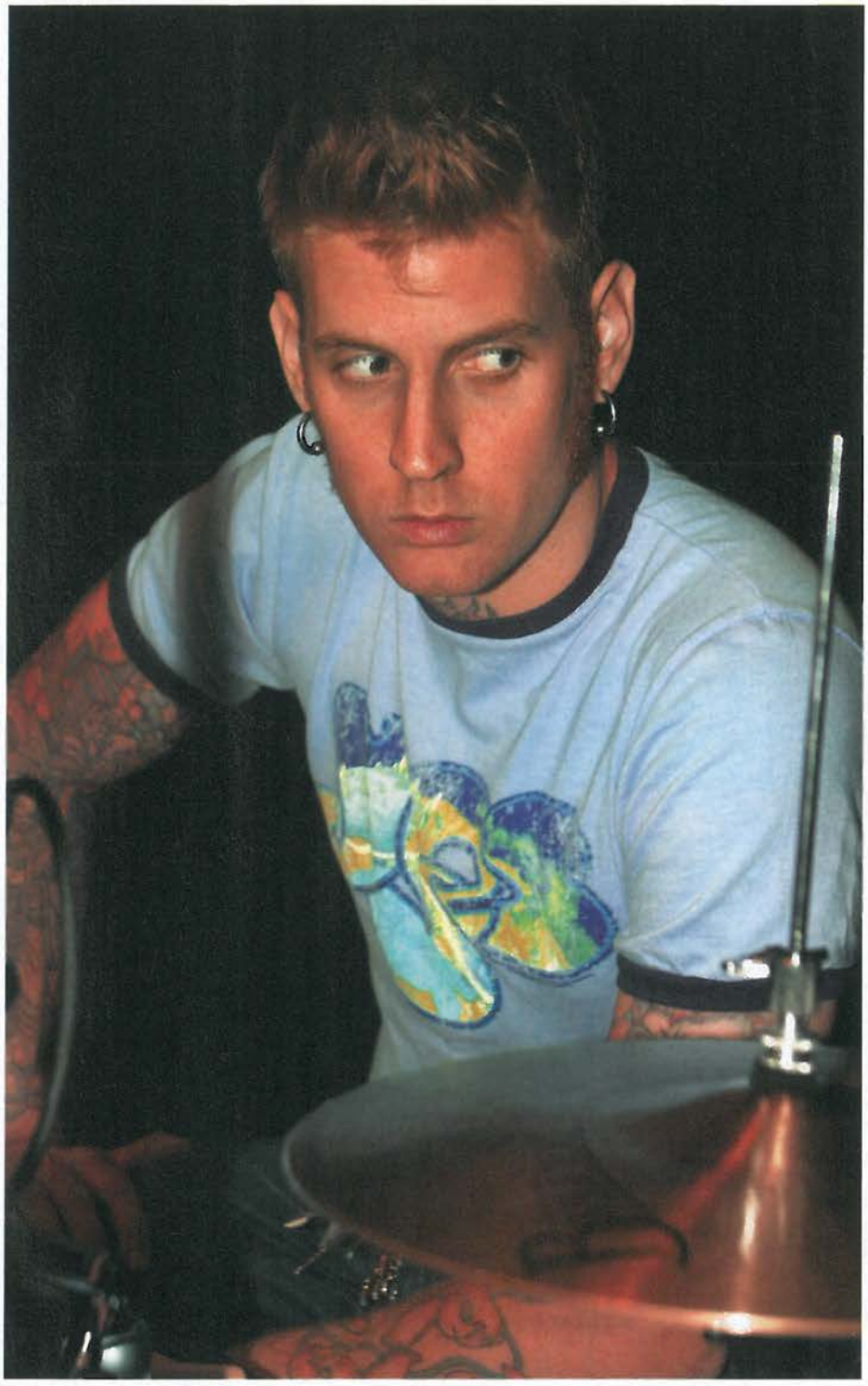
Brann Dailor

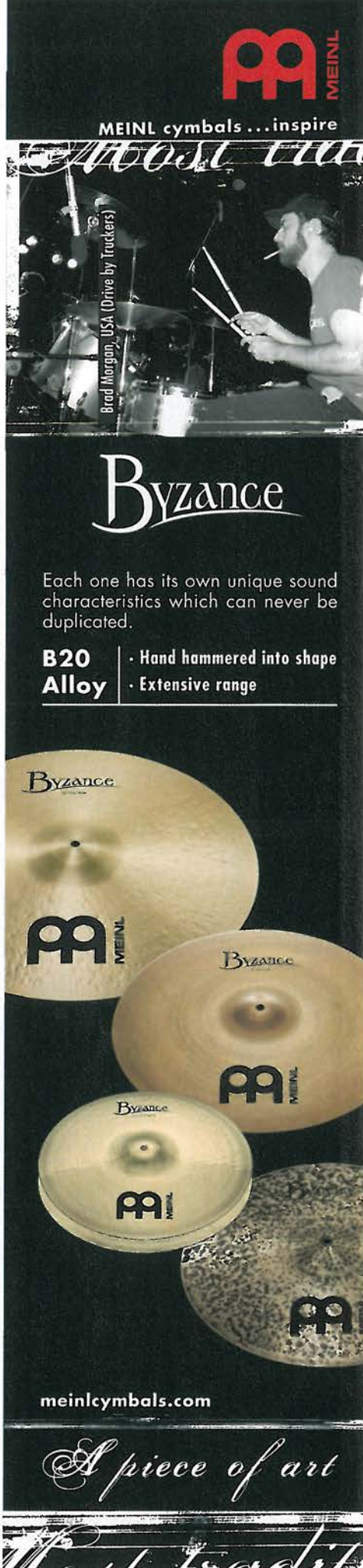
MD: First off, how does it feel to be getting all this exposure in the press?

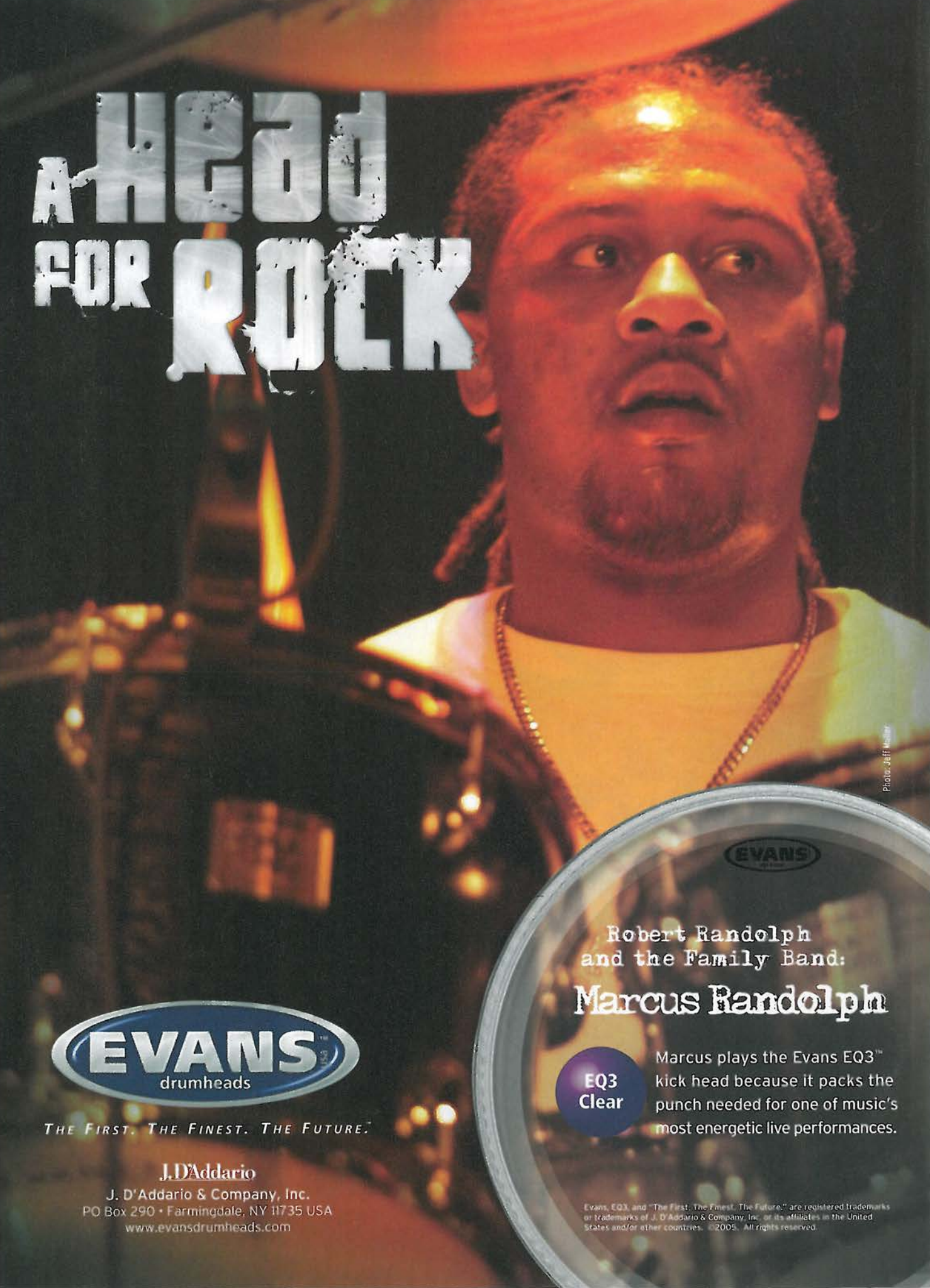
Brann: I don't know if it fazes me all that much. I don't really think about it. When I see stuff in magazines, it's really nice, but it's mainly something to show my mom or dad and say, "See, you made the right choice by letting me do this." [laughs] It's like a repayment for me beating on my drums for hours and hours at a time, all day long.

MD: When did you start playing drums?

Brann: When I was four, living in Rochester. At the time, my uncle played in my grandfather's band. My uncle played drums, my aunt Sharon played bass, and my grandfather played guitar. It was country, pretty much. They did classics like Waylon Jennings and George Jones. My uncle played in some rock groups, too.



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Brann Dailor

The attic at my grandparents' house was a jam room, and there was a drumset there: a Rogers kit from the late '60s with an 18" kick—so I could reach the pedal. Every time I went to my grandparents, my uncle would take me up there, put headphones on me, and see if I could play along to Montrose or something.

Later on, after my parents split up, my mom started dating the drummer in her band. He moved in and they practiced at my house. His drums were in the living room; it was this massive Neil Peart–style kit, with twenty-five cymbals, many toms, and double bass. I could barely play it, and my mom's boyfriend would get pissed if I did. So I played them on purpose.

Their band played covers of Judas Priest, Black Sabbath, and Rush. Later on, they got a keyboardist and were doing covers of old Genesis pieces like "Supper's Ready." Then my uncle got a new kit and gave me his old one, which was a mess but I didn't care. I was eight. I would go crazy with it.

MD: Did you ever take lessons when you were a kid?

Brann: When I was about six, my dad and I were listening to The Police in his car and I was tapping along to it. He said, "Oh, you can keep a rhythm. You're kind of good at it. Do you like playing drums?" I said, "I love it." "Do you want lessons?" I said, "I guess so." I had one lesson.

I went to a teacher who had two drumsets set up next to each other. I sat behind one kit and started playing a little beat, but the teacher stopped me and pointed over to a corner where there were two snare drums, two stools, and two music charts. I sat down and he went, "Left, right, left, right, left, right," for half an hour, and I was like, "Boring." I told my dad, "I never want to go back," and that was the end of lessons for me.

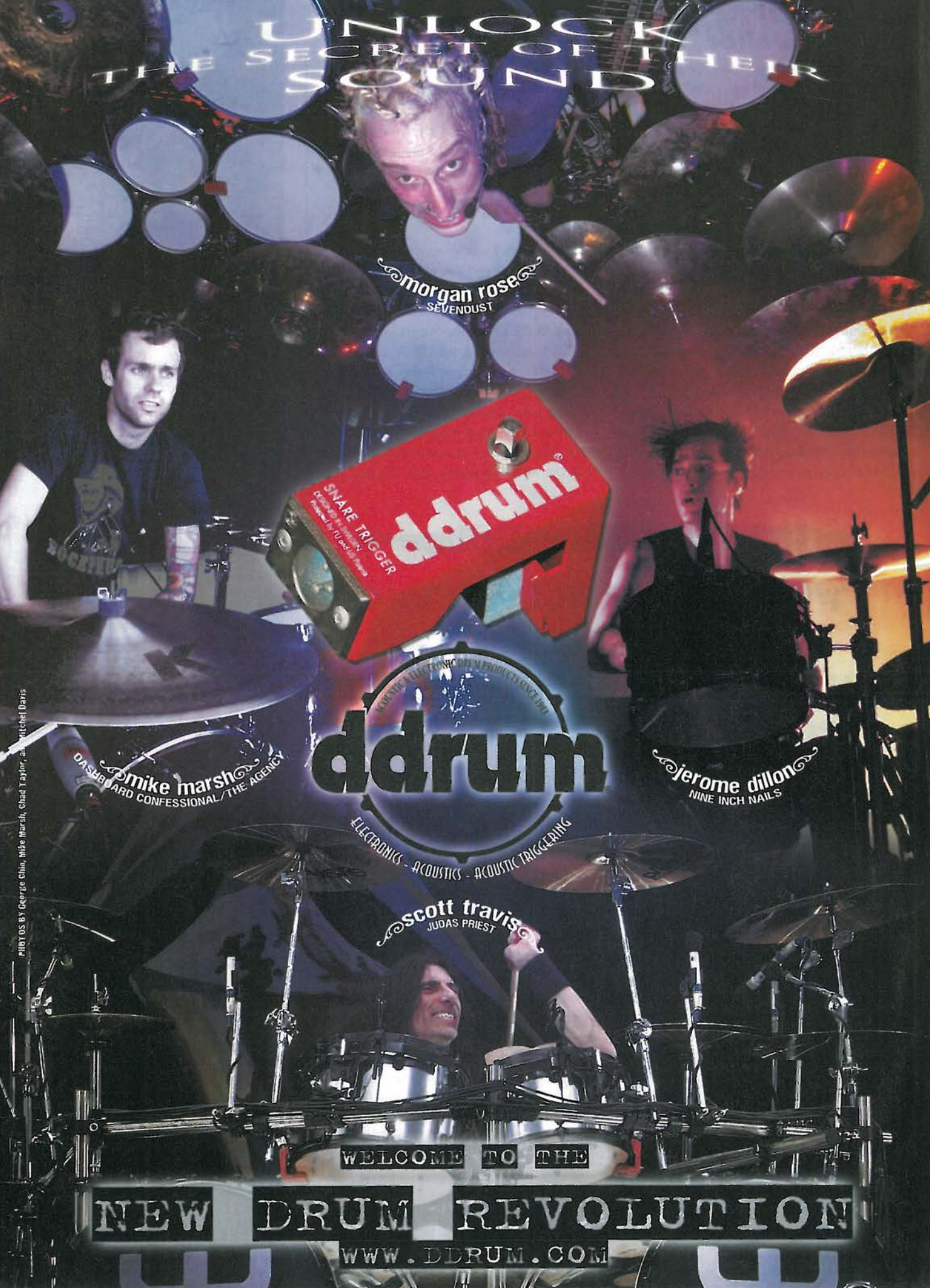
MD: When did you meet up with Bill Kelliher?

Brann: When I was seventeen, I started the band Lethargy, and we played this technical kind of metal. We went through a couple of rhythm guitarists, but eventually Bill joined in the mid-'90s. We played together in that band until about '98. Then I ended up quitting and joining Today Is The Day, and then Bill joined Today Is The Day, but playing bass. I don't think he enjoyed bass, because he's a guitar player.

MD: Eventually, you and Bill moved to Atlanta and Mastodon was formed. The band's metal embraces prog rock pretty extensively, but Mastodon can't really be considered a full-on prog band.

Brann: We're into prog, but punk happened, and death metal happened, and grind-core and grunge happened. All sorts of musical movements happened, and all that stuff is in our heads. So we're not just trying to completely re-create prog rock. But we are romantic about the way things used to be, and about the freedom that progressive bands of the '70s like Genesis, King Crimson, and Yes demonstrated. That's when ugly people were allowed to play music and be successful at it. [laughs] They could play their instruments—play

> "WE'RE INTO PROG, BUT PUNK HAPPENED, DEATH METAL HAPPENED, AND GRIND-CORE AND GRUNGE HAPPENED. ALL THAT STUFF IS IN OUR HEADS."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their asses off—and that was something to be admired. I think that's happening again with bands like Tool and Mars Volta. I see us as a big snowball that's picking up things from the past and continuing to roll forward.

MD: You must have a big list of drummer influences.

Brann: For metal, the main guys would be Mikkey Dee, Dave Lombardo, and Nicko McBrain; for jazz, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, and Billy Cobham; for prog, definitely Phil Collins and Bill Bruford. I also really love John Bonham. And I can't forget Stevie Wonder. He played drums on a lot of his '70s stuff.

Phil Collins is probably my favorite drummer. I never heard beats like his before, and he moved really nicely around the kit, like water. He did these little hi-hat things that were very tasty. I don't think he gets enough credit as a drummer, and he seems to be blamed for ruining Genesis.

MD: What newer drummers have inspired you?

Brann: I really like Jean-Paul Gaster from Clutch—he's a badass, a new John Bonham. Dave Witte from Burnt By The Sun, and formerly of Human Remains, is one of my favorite drummers out there. We've been trading beats since we were teenagers. Other drummers I like include Chris Pennie from Dillinger Escape Plan, Sean Reinert from Gordian Knot, Death, and Cynic, Danny Carey from Tool, and Damon Che from Don Caballero. I like watching my wife play too. She's in a band called Cat Fight.

MD: Did anything especially challenging come up in the studio during the *Leviathan* sessions?

Brann: It went by so quickly. It took about a day and a half to record. There was a song that I mentally started having problems with. It had one part I couldn't get past and every time I approached it, all I could think of was, "Oh God, here's that part that I screwed up last time!" It turns into this psychological thing. And when you're psychologically unable to get past a part, you're not having fun playing.

MD: What song was it?

Brann: "Iron Tusk." I got to a certain fill and couldn't get passed it. The best thing to do is move on to the next song. Then, when you hopefully get your confidence back, you can revisit the tune that's giving you problems.

MD: What are some of your favorite drumming chops and approaches?

Brann: I use paradiddles a lot, and I'm really into grace notes, which I got from Mikkey Dee. I've used his beats over the years, but not copied exactly. It's a tipping of the hat to him, really. My friend Dave Witte from Burnt By The Sun has this ongoing thing of stealing bits and pieces from different drummers, which I do as well. I've done things like throw in a Neil Peart fill that I mixed with a Billy Cobham lick and then ended it with a Phil Collins roll. It's pretty funny.

And one of my favorite things to do is play past beat 1. After a standard fill, I think it's fun to go past it and come in later. That adds a lot of excitement to the music.

MD: Do you often stick to a pre-planned drum approach? Do you ever stray, spontaneously, into realms of improvisation?

Brann: I think it's a combination of both. In the studio, when we're practicing, I'm open to things happening by accident. But when I roll into the studio to record, I pretty much know what I'm going to put down. If something does happen by accident and I'm happy with it, then cool, I'll try to recreate it every time.

As far as live goes, I pretty much try to be perfect just because I don't want to screw anybody else up. I feel as if our band is crazy enough; sometimes it's like a train that's about to derail itself. If one note gets misplaced, then everything is going to fall apart.

MD: On *Leviathan* and *Remission*, your drumming is so up front in the mix. Were a lot of mic's employed?

Brann: Yes. Besides having mic's all over the kit, we used a lot of room mic's as well. Our engineer, Matt Bayles, goes for a certain sound and he's very good at mic' placement. He definitely puts me in the mix as a main instrument. Matt gets a very powerful sound but also captures every little nuance. He understands us. Hopefully in the future, when we have more time to record, we can play around with the drum sound. I'm into a *big* sound.

MD: There's optimistic, uplifting themes on *Leviathan* and *Remission*. It's not your typical extreme-metal material.

Brann: Most of us in the band are hopefully done with the hardest parts of our lives. At this point, I think we're in pretty good

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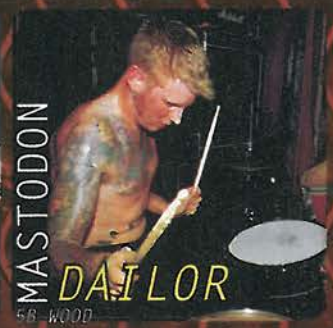

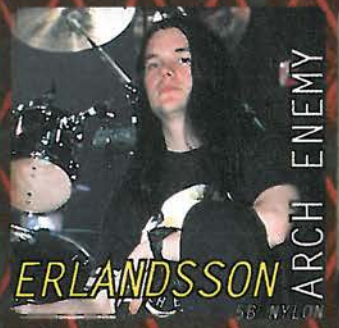

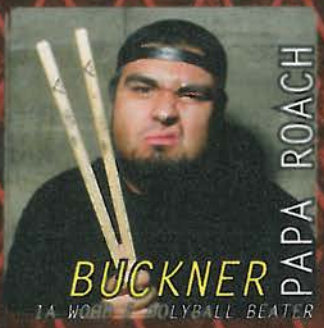

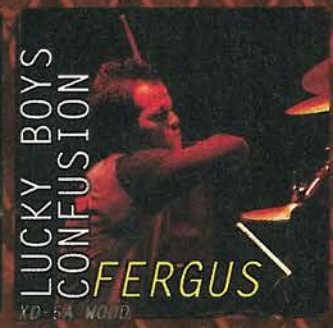

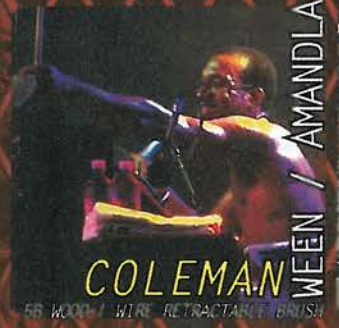

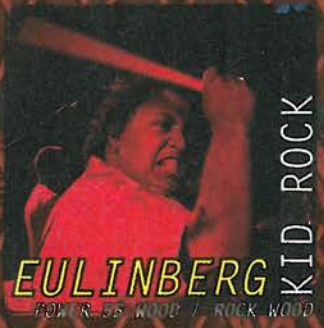

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places. I experienced a lot of bad stuff before finding these guys to play with. The music we were writing really gave me a place to put all of it, and I was finally able to leave some stuff behind, as I said. "Remission" can mean forgiveness. It's a really powerful word for us. If a cancer patient hears that word, it means a lot.

MD: You've been known to use a Dictaphone to record musical ideas while on the road. Do you still use one?

Brann: Yes. If you're walking around and you get a cool part in your head and don't have any means of recording it, then you're screwed. I think it's a good idea to have one handy at all times. A lot of the best ideas I get come when I'm just about to go to sleep at night. I'm a constant worrier, and usually I feel like the weight of the world is on my shoulders, especially when I go to bed. Plus I'm a total insomniac, so I'll just lie there and sometimes stuff that I'm worrying about turns into a really cool riff.

MD: The album is orchestrated in a grandiose manner, as if it's one big sea of music. It reminded me of some classical pieces.

Brann: There's a total link to classical music and a more orchestrated sound and flow. But it's probably more subconscious. It's not planned, it just comes out. We were listening to Beethoven's "Symphony No. 9 In D Minor" and Mozart's "Requiem," which are super heavy. Those are two of my favorite pieces.

MD: What comes first in the writing process, the beats or the riffs?

Brann: Once in a while, I'll have a beat that a riff can be written around. But I haven't done that in a long time. It's mainly been that the riff comes first and then I try to figure out something cool to play along with it.

Usually, if I wrote the riff, then I have something planned out. But if Brent, Bill, or Troy wrote it, then it'll work one of two ways: Either I'll have it right off the bat, or it'll take a little while for the beat to reveal itself. It pretty much goes by feel. I'll get a basic outline or skeleton for the song and then the fills will come in later.

MD: Mastodon's music is unique in that all of you take part in the writing process.

Brann: I think it's a benefit that everyone writes because it allows for a diverse

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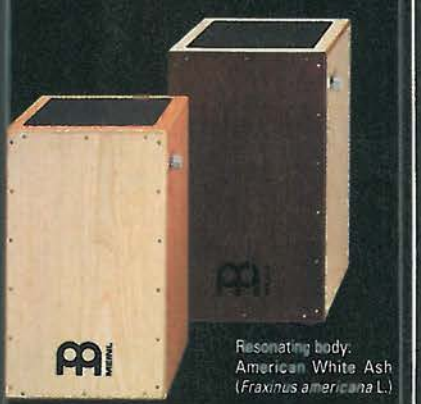

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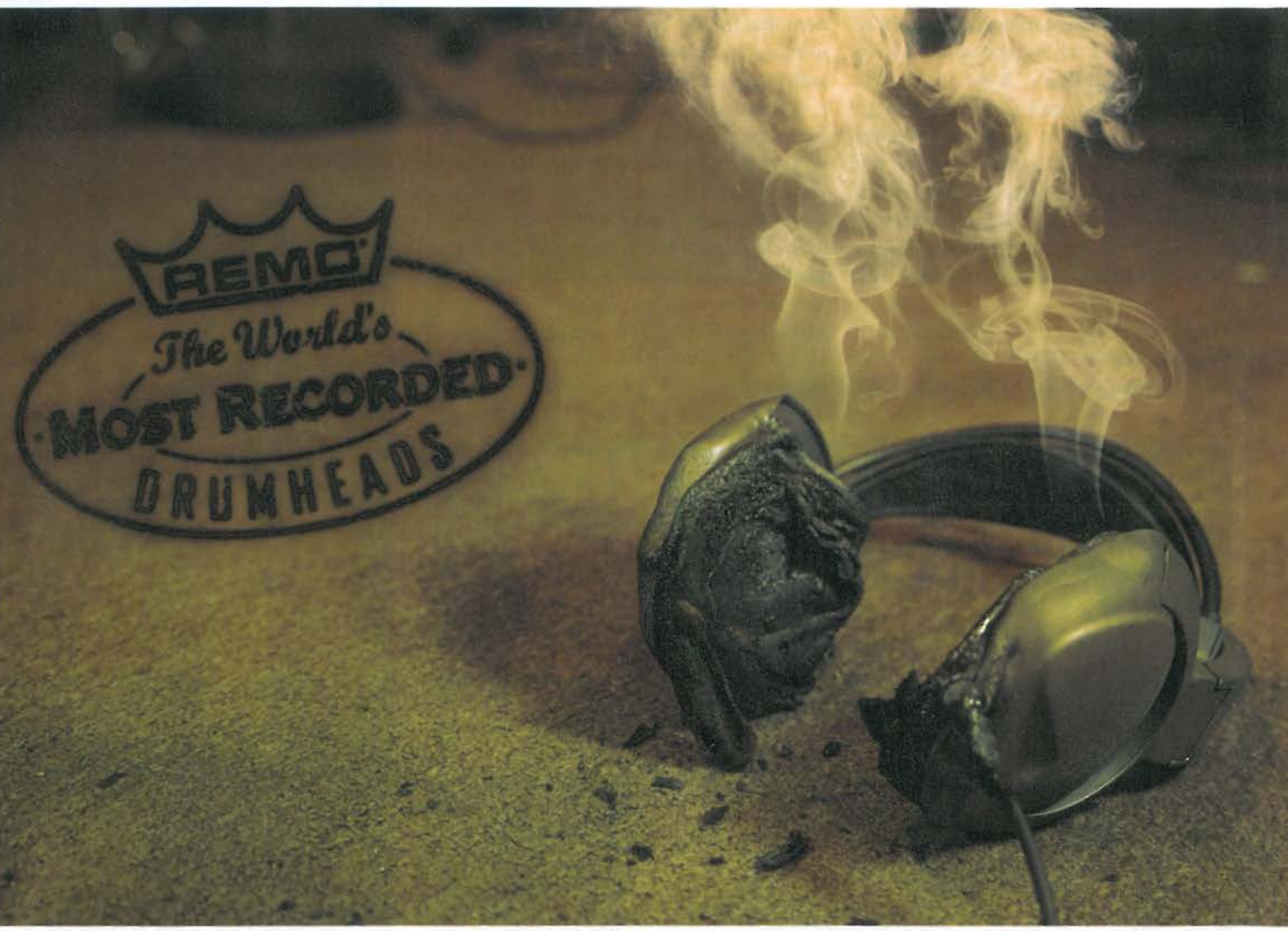

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Russ Miller
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Hillary Duff

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Neil Peart
Rush

Shawn Pelton
Saturday Night
Live

Stephen Perkins
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album. The stuff I write is probably the most simplistic. On *Leviathan*, I wrote "Blood And Thunder," "Iron Tusk," "I Am Ahab," and half of "Seabeast." Brent writes the most complex stuff—"Aqua Dementia," for example—and I appreciate it because I want to be challenged by the guitar. But he doesn't know time signatures that well. So it's up to me to figure out a way to put a number on it.

Brent and Troy write most of the lyrics. They sing, and it's better for the vocalist to come up with lyrics, unless I feel strongly about something. I always thought it looked goofy when a drummer sang. I'd rather concentrate on drums. That's also why I don't do stick tricks. [laughs]

MD: Have there been any insane or funny things that have happened to Mastodon on stage?

Brann: We were playing with Slipknot and someone threw a gigantic stuffed banana at us. It had a Slipknot sticker on it. I also had a completely full cup of beer hit my ride cymbal once. I was like, "Damn, those are six bucks!" But it added a nice wash to the cymbal sound. [laughs] I haven't been hit with a bottle yet, so that's good.

There have also been times when Brent has jumped up on my kick. On a couple of times when he's jumped off, his foot has gotten caught, and my entire kit went tumbling across the stage. Hey, it's all good for the show.

MD: Can you offer any advice for aspiring drummers?

Brann: Listen to other drummers, and learn from them. But don't try to achieve what someone else has done. Work on your own thing and do what you can do. Push the boundaries, of course, and try to push yourself to do more, to be a better player or the best player you can be. But try to keep your own voice behind the kit.

MD: Any plans for a new record yet?

Brann: We're in the preliminary stages of creating riffs. I've got my Dictaphone rolling. You can see where things are going with Brent, because when he gets up to do soundcheck, he'll play his guitar for about a half an hour or so, and you'll hear bits and pieces of what's to come. Everyone's constantly thinking about what we're going to do next.

Tom Brechtlein

Full Circle

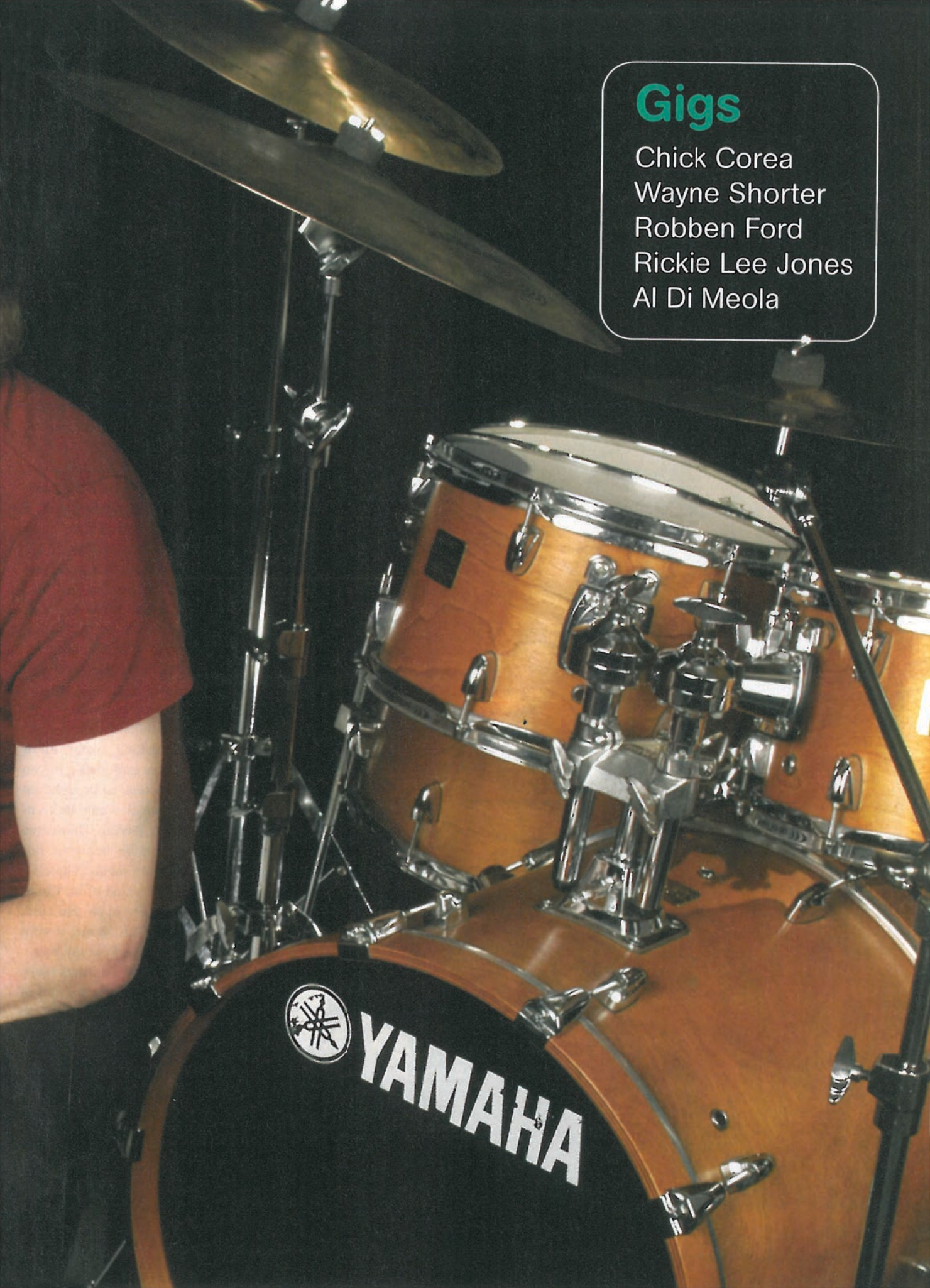
Story by Robyn Flans • Photos by Alex Solca

Full circle, indeed. For Tom Brechtlein, that's the best way to describe his impressive musical journey thus far. Chick Corea was his first major gig, a chair he held from 1978 to 1982. Brechtlein created quite a stir when he was with the jazz great. His drumming was impressive, especially considering the fact that the young phenom was only twenty when he got the gig. Now, over twenty years later, the drummer is back making music in Touchstone, a group led by Corea.

Of course, in between Brechtlein amassed an impressive list of credits, including work with Wayne Shorter, Rickie Lee Jones, and nearly a decade with guitarist Robben Ford. (The recently released DVD *In Concert* shows Tom impressively laying it down.) But now he's back for chapter two with Chick.

For a taste of Touchstone—Brechtlein, Corea, plus Carlos Benavent (bass), Jorge Pardo (flute and soprano sax), and Ruben Dantas (percussion)—check out their recent live recording, *Rumba Flamenco*. A studio album, *The Ultimate Adventure,* is due out shortly, on which Brechtlein plays three tracks. (Airto, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Steve Gadd also appear on the record.)

When Brechtlein has the time, he has a group with Jimmy Earl and Jeff Babko called Rhythm Dogs, and he's starting up a unit with Steve Weingart, Carlitos Del Puerto, and Gary Meek. And sometimes the drummer finds himself playing with Luis Conte's band. But he's booked solid throughout the year and into the next with Touchstone, the musical experience at the core of Brechtlein's musical evolution.


Gigs
Chick Corea
Wayne Shorter
Robben Ford
Rickie Lee Jones
Al Di Meola
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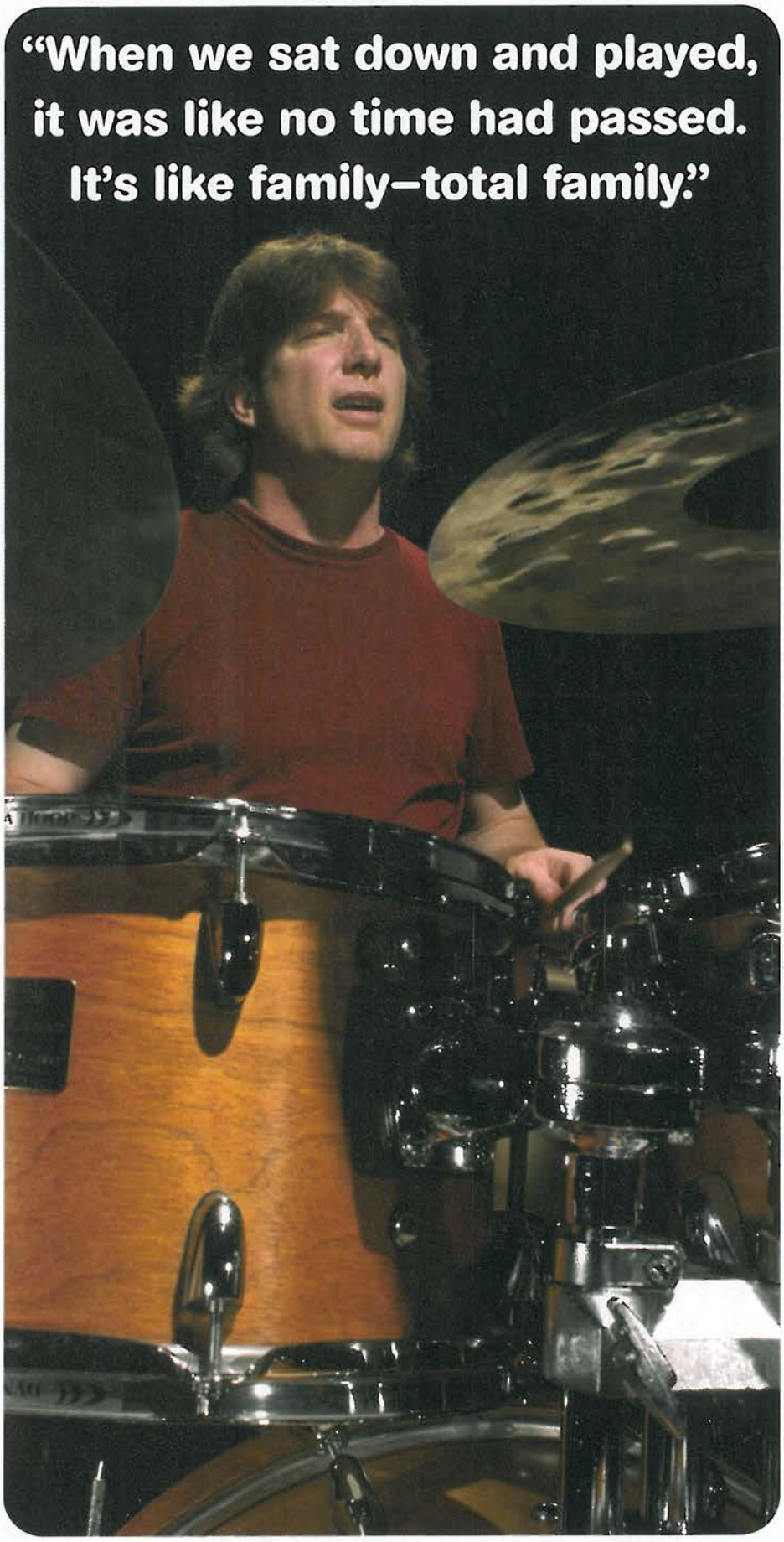
"When we sat down and played, it was like no time had passed. It's like family–total family."



MD: Let's rewind twenty-five years. How did you originally land the gig with Chick Corea back in the '70s?

Tom: Chick was a trial-by-fire gig. I had never even been on a plane before. I was a kid from Long Island, and pretty naive. To come out to LA to rehearse with Chick was like, *wow*. But the gig came about for me by taking lessons with a keyboard player named Mike Garson. Like all of us, he was listening to jazz and fusion—the early '70s—Miles' *Bitches Brew*, Tony Williams' *Emergency!*, The Mahavishnu Orchestra, and Return To Forever. I had that sort of under my belt already. But I went to Garson because I wanted to learn how to play in a jazz trio setting. I figured, instead of going to a drum teacher, I would go to a piano guy because *that's* the person I'll be accompanying.

I'd go over to Mike Garson's house, set up my stuff, and we'd play. He'd then say, "No, not that, play a little lighter here." I learned a lot from that situation. Then Mike got the gig with Stanley Clarke. He went to LA to play on Stanley's record, and he met Chick. When Chick asked him, "Do you know any drummers?" Mike said, "I've got a guy. He's a kid from Long Island, he's green." So when Chick came through New York he auditioned me with three different bass players—Anthony Jackson, Ken Smith, and Rick Laird.

MD: What was the audition like?

Tom: It was nerve-wracking. I knew all of his old stuff, but he was auditioning me on new material. The first tune he brought out was "The One Step," which would be coming out on his *Friends* record. That came off alright, and then he brought out "Cappuccino," also from *Friends*. There's a modal section in it that's kind of an Elvin-esque, Trane thing—very open. He said, "Play over this vamp." Well, to me, it went over like a lead balloon, but I did my best.

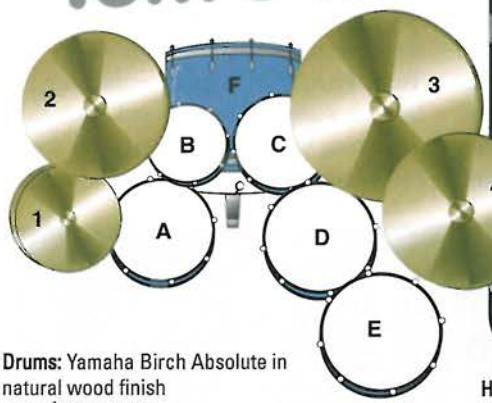
The audition process was six hours—two hours with each bass player. At the end of the whole thing, I shook Chick's hand and he said, "I'll talk to you soon, Tommy." I was thinking, "That's a good sign, I think." Two weeks later, I got a call. The Herbie Hancock/Chick Corea Duets tour was coming through, and Chick invited me to Carnegie Hall. I was there the whole day, although nobody was telling me anything. I was just hanging out. Chick then said, "Can you come again tomorrow?" So the

next day I hung out again. Between shows at Carnegie Hall, Chick said, "Tommy, can you come to this address after the gig tonight—and bring your drums?" I zipped back home all the way to Long Island, put the drums in the car, and we played.

Jeff Berlin was there, and it sounded great. I figured, "He's got the gig." Later on, I found out Chick was trying to match me up with a bass player. After that, he said, "I'll call you in a week." On February 10 at 10:00, he called me up. I figured he was going to say, "Nice try, kid, we'll see you next year." But he said, "So Tommy, I want you to come on the road with me." I said, "Sure, that's terrific." He said, "I want you to listen to a couple of things. Listen to Coltrane, Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, and Eddie Palmieri. We'll get going in March." I said, "Cool." "Okay, man, welcome aboard." I said, "Okay, see ya." Click. And then I screamed!

I learned the ropes from Chick—how to play hard music, phrasing, how to comp behind a soloist, how to interplay with a soloist—to not always "chase" the soloist.

Tom's Kit



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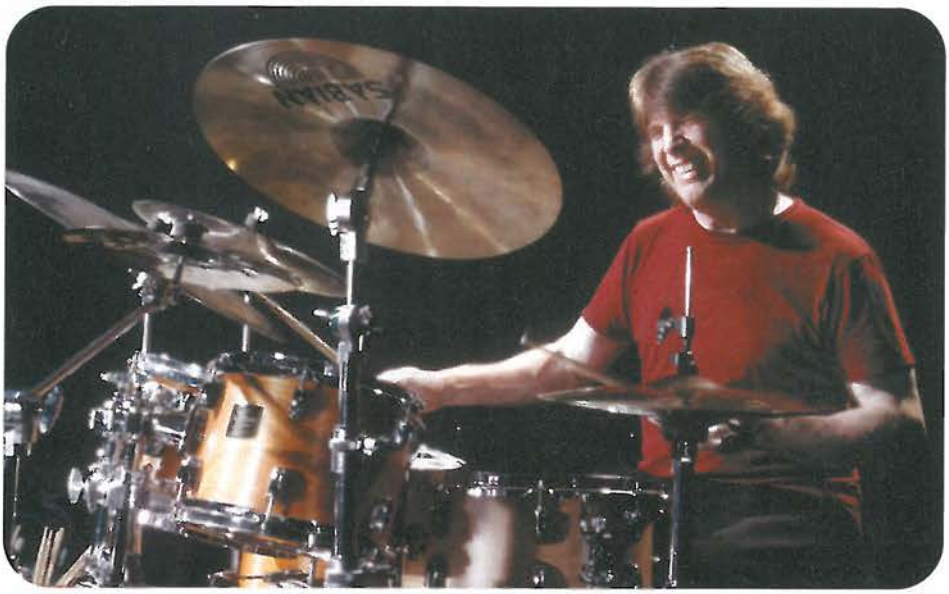
That means if somebody is playing a rhythm, you don't play the same rhythm the soloist is playing. Instead of chasing the solo, every once in a while, you weave underneath. The soloist is playing something and you play something complementary under it. So I think of my time with Chick as an apprenticeship for four years.



And it's funny, but my goal had been to get a major gig by the time I was twenty.

MD: What did you actually do to work on that objective? What were the steps?

Tom: First, there was determination. You have to make a decision and stick to it. I was going to Hofstra University at the time for music education—you know, something to fall back on. I'll never forget, when I told Mike Garson I was doing that, he drew two imaginary circles on the wall and said, "You can do this or you can do that, but you can't do both. You can either teach, or you can play. Which way do you want to go?" And immediately I said, "I want to play." You have to make the decision that this is what you want to do. I was studying Scientology at the time too, which helped me realize that you should make a decision and do it, without any distractions.

MD: What formal training did you have?

Tom: I came up through the East Meadow school system. Nassau County had great music programs and teachers. I remember having group lessons during the summer with a teacher who later became my private teacher when I got into junior high and high school. His name is John O'Reilly and he taught me great basics from the time I was thirteen until I was eighteen.

MD: What were you listening to?

Tom: I listened to everything from Mitch Mitchell, Keith Moon, and Ringo Starr to Dave Garibaldi, Tony Williams, Elvin

Brechtlein On Record

Recordings

Artist	Album
Brandon Fields	Other Places
Robben Ford & The Blue Line	Robben Ford & The Blue Line
Chick Corea	Again And Again
Chick Corea	Rhumba Flamenco
Bunny Brunel	Ivanhoe
Chick Corea	Secret Agent
Robben Ford & The Blue Line	Handful Of Blues

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Miles Davis	Four & More	Tony Williams
Miles Davis	E.S.P.	Tony Williams
Miles Davis	Miles Smiles	Tony Williams
Miles Davis	Box Set '65-'68	Tony Williams
Herbie Hancock	Thrust	Mike Clark
Chick Corea	Now He Sings, Now He Sobs	Roy Haynes
Chick Corea	Past, Present & Futures	Jeff Ballard
The Meters	Rejuvenation	Zigaboo Modeliste

Jones, and Buddy Rich. My favorite at the time was Joe Morello. My introduction to small group playing was Joe Morello. I loved his musicality. There was something about the way his drums sounded and the way he played that was incredibly tasty.

From there I checked out a lot of big band stuff—Maynard Ferguson, Ed Soph with Woody Herman, and Mel Lewis with Thad Jones. Listening to Mel is how I learned how to play a shuffle. Then, of course, I worked out of all of the important method books. In tandem with that, there was the music department at East Meadow High School, which was run by a musical genius, Bill Katz.

There were three jazz ensembles in my high school, and I was fortunate enough to be in the first one for all three years I was there. That group went on tour and even recorded an album every year. We played charts that weren't the usual high school curriculum stuff. We got charts by Thad Jones, the current Woody stuff, and Sammy Nestico. And sometimes they'd bring in guys from New York to rehearse the band as if we were pros.

After I graduated from high school, I attended Nassau County Community College, where I had a great percussion teacher named Ronnie Gould. He taught me a lot of the stuff that Freddie Gruber talks about, like throwing the stick and letting the stick do the work. I also studied with John O'Reilly and Howie Mann, who taught me big band stuff.

After that I went to Hofstra. My buddies were going to North Texas State and wanted me to go down there with them, but I thought I'd stay close to New York to see if I could get a gig. Well, they were surprised when they came back at winter break and I had the gig with Chick.

MD: What did you learn from Chick early on?

Tom: Chick taught me a lot about rhythm. I remember I was about to leave the studio one night and he said, "Tommy, we have one more tune to record, this thing called 'Flamenco.'" It's the last tune on the *Tap Step* record. It has one of those Chick-esque sections. The tune is ridiculous, the most complicated tune on the album. I said, "Do you have a chart?" He said, "No, man, you'll memorize it, you'll get it." He played it for me, but it was ridiculous! But he broke it down into three sections, and when we recorded it, we got it in the first or second take. I couldn't believe it.

Chick seems to know how to bring out what you already know. I did that record after I was with him for two years, so I got used to the way he phrased things. I learned phrasing, rhythm, and how to accompany from Chick.

MD: What did you learn from Wayne Shorter?

Tom: Wayne was a gas to play with. I love him so much. He taught me to have confidence in myself as a player, but he did so in his own mystical way. Wayne talks in a lot of analogies, and they work. I remember the first time we rehearsed and I said, "Wayne, what do you want here?" And he turned around and said, "You know what you're doing. Make a movie."

Interesting story about Wayne: We were on tour in Europe and every gig was going

great, each getting better than the last. When we hit Berlin, Joe Zawinul was on the bill, opening for us. At the time, he was doing all this electronic stuff—no band—and the audience was throwing paper airplanes on the stage and booing him. While this was happening, I was standing on the side of the stage. Wayne came up to me, and in a very dark, negative way, said, "Tom, when we get on stage and we play 'Beauty And The Beast,' I want you to dance. I want people to know you can play *before* your drum solo." And he walked away. It was so weird for Wayne to do that, because he was very positive.

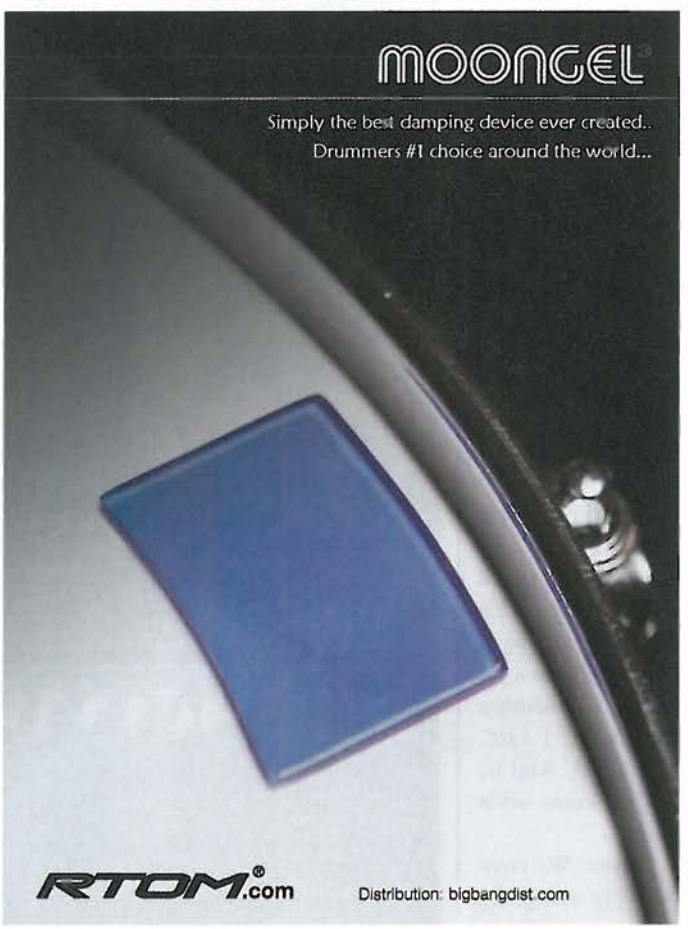
Well, we got on the stand and started playing. It started off with a vamp and Wayne was looking at me. He then walked around me and said, "Dance." I thought, "What are you doing?" So I played. He started playing a little bit and turned around and said a bit louder, "Dance!" I was getting pissed, so I started playing crazy. We finished the tune and the audience went nuts.

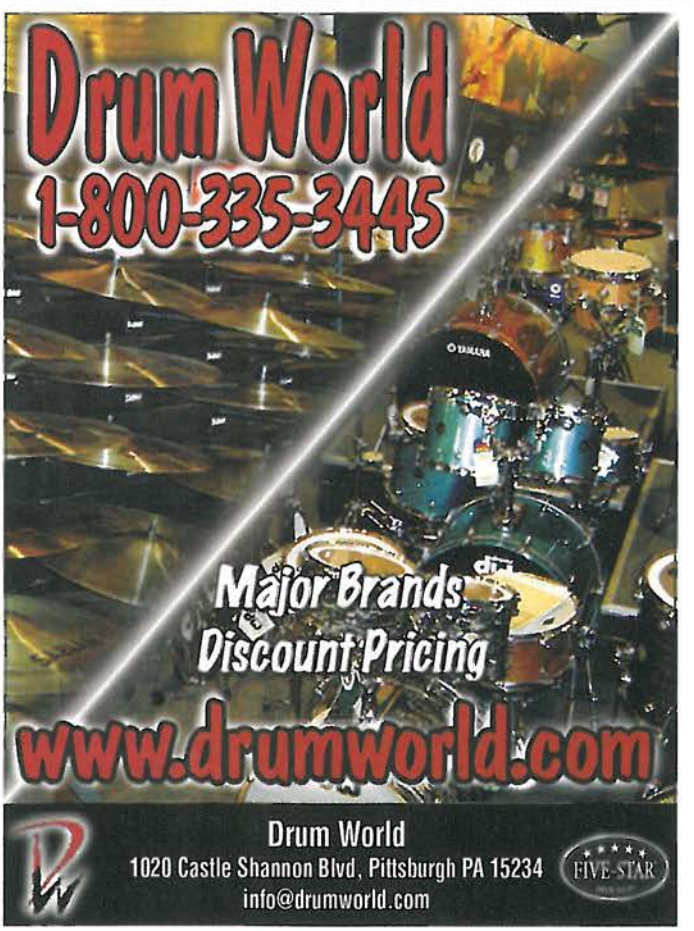
"I don't care how many notes you play, how cool you look, or how great your drums sound–your playing has got to groove."

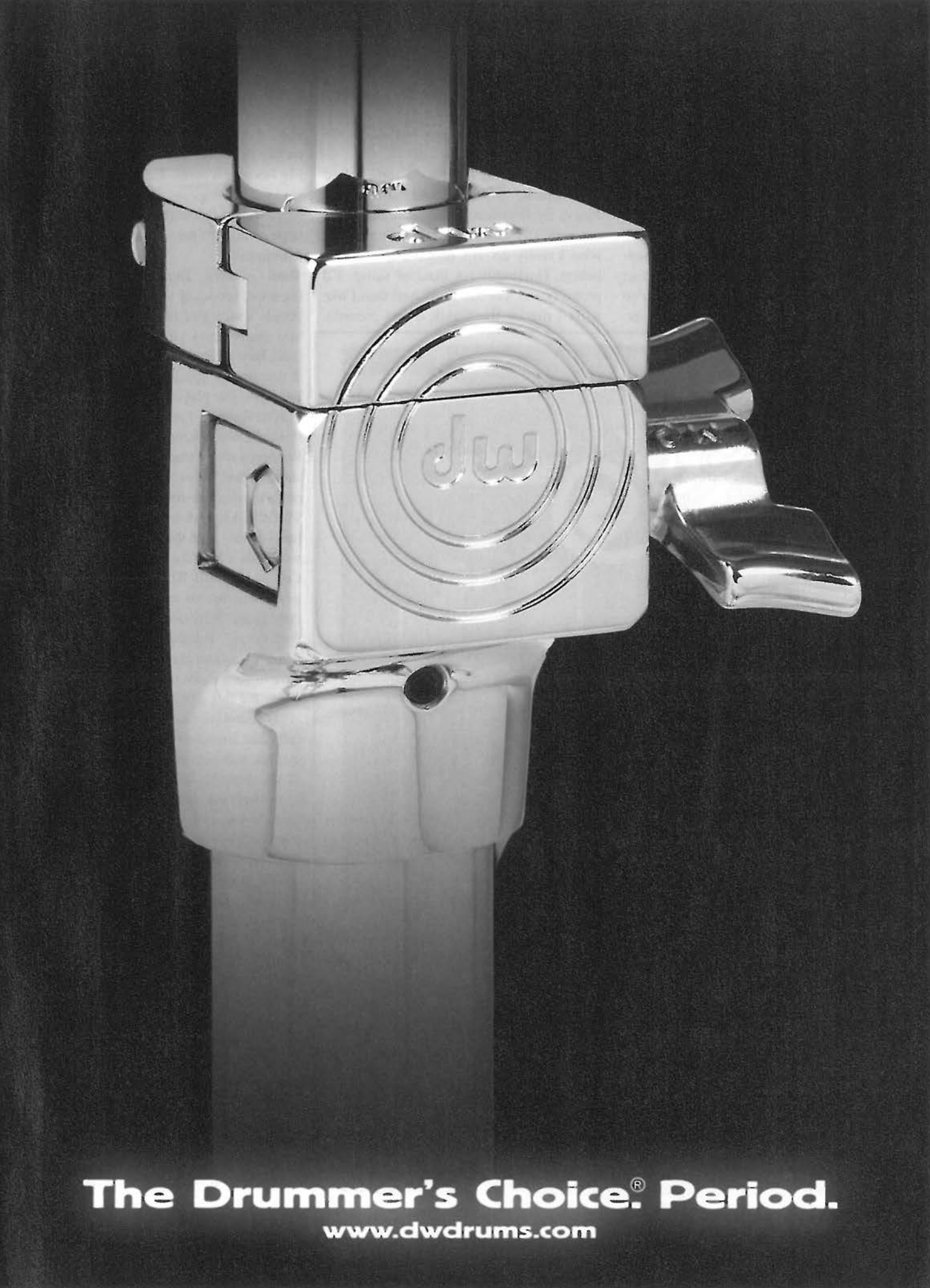
When we finished the gig, Wayne got a standing ovation. Someone backstage said, "Do you know what you guys just did? You just wowed the toughest jazz audience in Europe." And then I remembered that in Berlin, they were really tough. And I said, "So *that's* why Wayne was giving me all that grief." And Wayne popped his head out and said, "You got that right." And he gave me a hug. He observed the audience and knew he needed some extra gas. The drummer is in the engine room, so that's how he got the result he was looking for.

Wayne always said, "Make a movie." But I never really understood what he was saying until we played the Blue Note sometime around 1990. We had played Paris the night before, and after the gig we got on a plane and flew to New York, where we went directly to the Blue Note for soundcheck. I remember I hadn't played there in four years, and I decided I was going to have fun and not try to prove something to the usual tough crowd there. We played, and all the nights ended up being great because it was all about making music. It wasn't about proving anything to anybody or showing off. We had a band that was making great music.

We played this one tune, "On The Eve Of Departure," which was about a mothership taking people to another planet. It had a big, grandiose ending. The tune came off beautifully. This may sound crazy, but I swear I saw the last flicker of the light of the mothership before it went out of the earth's atmosphere. I didn't tell anybody about it but I



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thought, "Wow, we made a movie. That's what Wayne was talking about!"

Those tunes on *Atlantis* were written pieces of music, but with both Chick and Wayne, I didn't come into the situation and go, "Okay, yeah, done." The music developed every day. It was always changing. And you don't talk about the changes, they just happen. The two things I learned from that are, you've got to let something happen, and you can't force it. If you start forcing it, you're thinking about it. You've got to just let it happen. That was the beauty of working with Wayne. It was a group of guys on stage going, "What's going to happen tonight?"

MD: Which of your recorded works are you most proud of, and why?

Tom: I like what I did on a tune called "You Got It," from a record called *Other Places* by Brandon Fields. It really came out naturally and it's a representation of what I really do. It's fusion-esque with a bebop, Garibaldi-ish kind of thing. I'd probably call it bebop funk. And then I like what I did on the Chick Corea records. There's a tune called "Slinky" on the *Secret Agent* record. I like the phrasing on it. I also like a lot of tracks I did with Robben Ford. There's a tune called "The Brother" on the first Blue Line record that I really like because it rocks. Each one has a different kind of thing.

MD: You were with Robben Ford for a huge chunk of time. What was that like for a drummer?

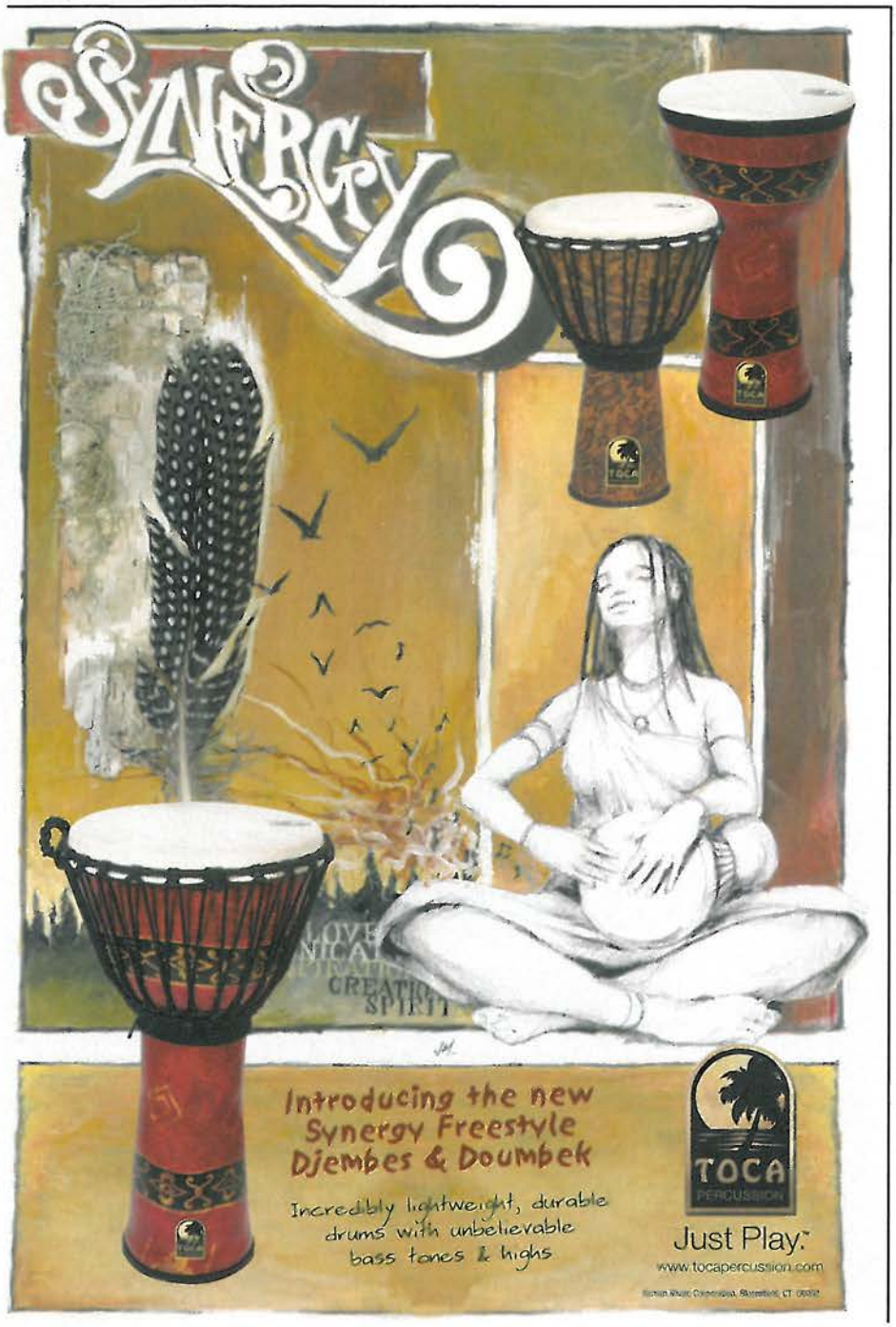
Tom: Grooving. That gig was about grooving hard, servicing the music, and making people dance and feel good. I don't care how many notes you play, how cool you look, how great your drums sound, or even if you have a special technique with your fingers—your playing has got to groove.

With Robben, I really learned the groove thing. Between Roscoe [Beck, bassist] and Robben, I really learned a lot about playing shuffles and blues. They didn't really tell me anything, but in the beginning days of The Blue Line we traveled in a van, taking turns driving, and they'd play all these classic blues cuts like Sonny Terry, Albert Collins, and BB King. They'd make suggestions, not so much drum-wise, but they'd say, "Why don't you play a rumba?" And I'd go, "Rumba?" But I'd try it, make it my own, and make it groove. All you have to do is listen to get it.

We did this workshop and Robben said, "Play a crosscut saw beat," which is basically like a rumba pattern on the bell of the cymbal with your right hand, and at the end of the thing he said, "I didn't know you knew that beat. How did you know that?" I said, "I was just listening to your comp." All you have to do is listen to the musicians around you.

The same thing goes for the shuffle. I think what sealed the deal for me in getting Robben's gig was that Roscoe turned around and said, "Play a double shuffle," and I thought, "Double shuffle—he must mean that Mel Lewis beat." I played that and a big smile came across both their faces.

Robben is one of the best comping guitarists I know, as well as being an incredible soloist. There aren't enough guitar players who know how to play rhythm. Rhythm guitar is a drummer's best friend. So it was a great experience for me, plus having it be our own group—The Blue Line, which was Robben's idea—was very cool of him. It was a very creative time.



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MD: And now you're back with Chick. How have things changed in twenty-three years?

Tom: I've played all the notes I can possibly play, so now it's easier. It's quicker, it's easier, and I've got the conceptual thing now. It's an ongoing process, but now I have enough tools to communicate what I want to communicate without getting technical about it. I can hear phrases and I understand it. I know the ropes. I don't look at the music from a technical aspect. I go by what I feel is coming from the music. I can also improvise better. I can turn corners without wondering if I did it right. And I think I can kick people's butts a little better now, too.

MD: How did the recent Chick gig come to be?

Tom: I was hanging with [keyboardist] Neil Larsen one day, and we were talking about how we were tired of going on the road and how we wanted to stay in town and play. Then, the very next day, Neil called and said, "Hey Tom, would you be interested in going on the road with Rickie Lee Jones?" Of course I said, "Yeah!" She's incredible. She's the last of the real singer/songwriters who do everything. Her stuff is like folk, jazz, R&B, and chamber music, with a lot of soul. We had a blast playing with her.

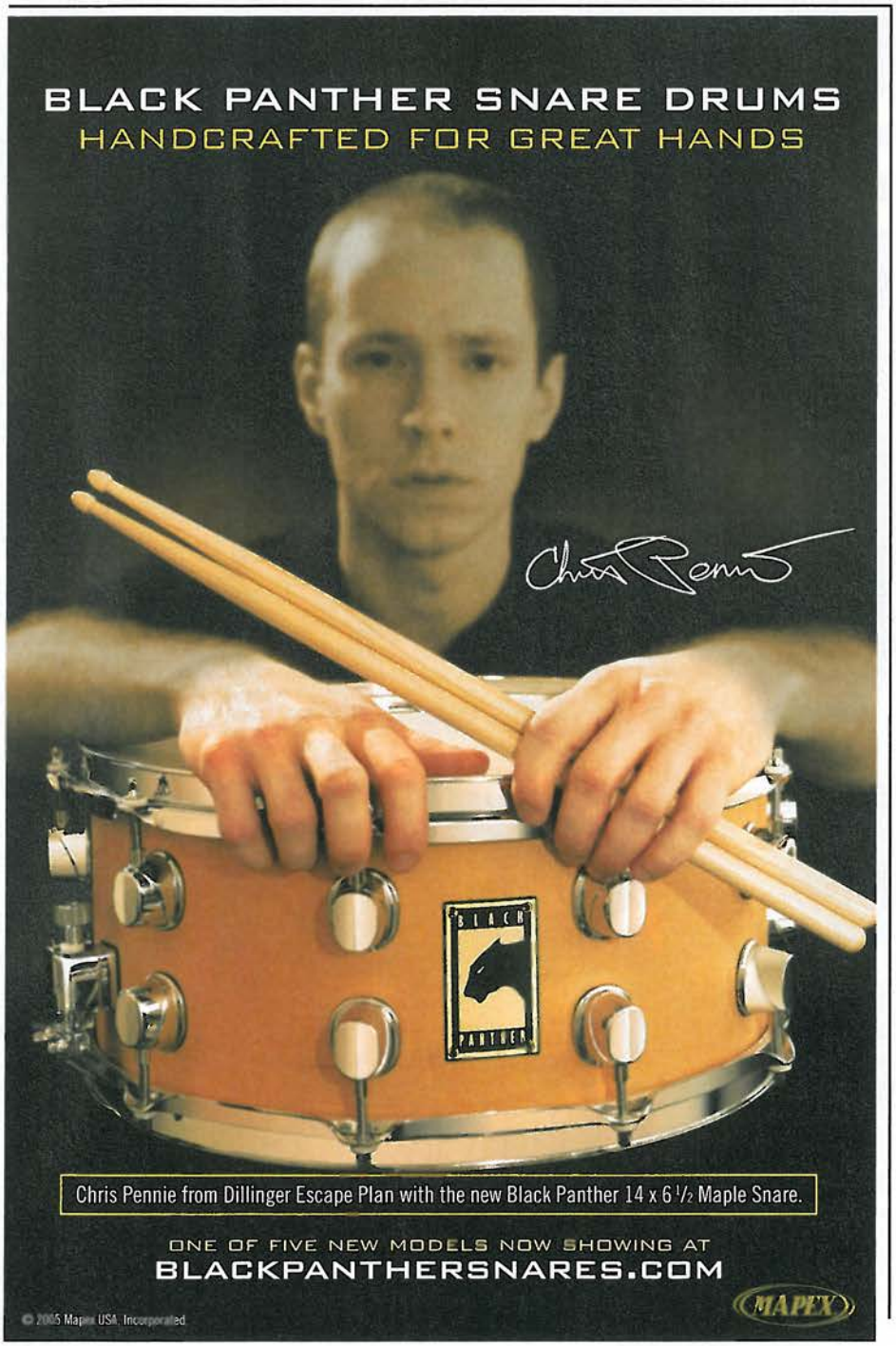
We did a thing called "Ugly Man," which is like a jazz waltz. So I thought, "Let's try a little Elvin in this section and see if she goes for it." I started playing like Elvin in that section and she turned to me and said she wanted *more* of that.

So I was on the road with Rickie Lee Jones and then received a call from Chick saying, "What are you doing in May?" He said he had me in mind for this new project, but that he needed to make sure Jeff Ballard couldn't do it, as he had promised the gig to him first. Chick said he would call me back the next day. Jeff Ballard is an incredible drummer, and if you haven't heard him play, you should pick up the Chick CD *Past, Present & Futures*. He is amazing and totally original.

Well, Rickie didn't have anything on the books for May, so I told Chick I was available. He called me back and said, "Okay Tommy, we're doing it, and by the way, Carlos Benavent, Ruben Dantas, and Jorge Pardo are in the group." Carlos played bass in the last group I was in with Chick in '82. We hadn't played together in all that time. But when we sat down and played, it was like no time had passed. It's like family—total family. With Robben it was family too, but this is like I took a nice trip around the world and now I'm back home again. It's really cool. And back with Chick, it's like, "Hey, big brother, look what I've learned while I was away."

Sometimes Chick will say, "Play that thing I heard you do with Robben three years ago." Yesterday we recorded the tune "King And Queen" for the new record. Before doing it Chick said, "Play some greasy stuff." Because of my experience with The Blue Line, I knew exactly what he meant. We recorded the tune once, and it was done.

So it's all come full circle for me. It's like being back home. And the best part is, we're all having a blast.



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Steven Curtis Chapman's WILL DENTON

Christian Drumming Ace

Story by John M. Aldridge • Photos by Paul La Raia

In the world of Christian pop music, there are few drummers who have so solidly established their place that they're always working, whether the music business is booming or not. Will Denton has been the touring and recording drummer with Christian music star Steven Curtis Chapman for the past eight years. But this monster player has also found the time to record and tour with artists such as Erin O'Donnell, Mark Schultz, Nichole Nordeman, Casting Crowns, Ginny Owens, Geoff Moore, Rachel Lampa, Sandy Patty, Twila Paris, David Phelps, Bob Carlisle, Avalon, Bryan Duncan, Russ Taff, NewSong, Cindy Morgan, and Jami Smith. That's a lot of gigs to fit into eight years!

It's an evolutionary process that has brought Denton from being "just a tour drummer" to the role of top-call studio drummer for major-label sessions. From his start with dc Talk in 1992 through his current bands, Denton has exemplified what it takes to make it and be successful as a drummer.

Franklin, Tennessee, just slightly south of Nashville, is the unofficial hometown of the Christian music recording industry. Christian music is the umbrella genre applied to styles as diverse as rap, pop, grunge rock, adult contemporary, Gospel, and even country music, which contains Christian-oriented lyrics. Most of this music originates in Franklin, which is where you'll find Will Denton when he's not on tour.

MD: How did you get started as a drummer?

Will: When I was four years old, my parents bought me a little drumset from the Sears wish book for Christmas. I demolished it in a week! I think I got a replacement a few weeks later, but it didn't last very long either. I pretty much went through a series of cheap, off-brand kits until I was around eight years old, when I got a kit with real wood shells.

I'm also proud to say that the first two records I ever learned to play along with were Barry Manilow's *Weekend In New England* and KISS's *Destroyer*—talk about covering your musical bases! Lessons started at around eight as well, and I just couldn't play enough. I've been playing all my life, and it's all I really wanted to do.

MD: What prompted you to target your playing to Christian music?

Will: It just seemed a no-brainer to me. I became a Christian at seventeen, and I just wanted all of the things I was passionate about to be used to reflect the change in my

"I never had a business card or a demo tape. I just felt that God would put me where I needed to be, and He always has."

life. I didn't have the faintest idea at the time there was so much more to Christian music than just some guy in a suit singing in church. But I was quickly introduced to artists like Russ Taff, Whiteheart, Amy Grant, and Phil Keagy, just to name a few, and I figured out that this music was powerful stuff. There were so many different styles, and the performances on the recordings were first-rate.

MD: How did you go about preparing for a career as a musician?

Will: I started at the State University in Valdosta, Georgia, about two hours west of my hometown in Waycross. I studied classical percussion there. Dr. David Morris was my professor and he instilled in me a real sense of pride and the importance of being a *musician*, not just a drummer.

For instance, Dr. Morris would often tell us that there was just as much artistry in a steady, even press roll as there was in the way an orchestra's concertmaster would bow his violin. He addressed us on our posture, our poise on stage, and the way we carried ourselves. He was insistent that we be proficient in theory, harmony, and all the mechanics of music far beyond the scope of rhythm, and I'm so grateful for the real sense of elevation he gave to me.

While in college I did the whole four-mallet marimba thing, the percussion ensembles, plus all of the orchestra and jazz bands. I pretty much lived in a tuxedo, and was really into it. But around my sophomore year, I began hearing about this school in Nashville that has a serious commercial music program. It was a small, private Baptist school named Belmont University.

So I moved to Nashville in 1990 and did my last two years of study at Belmont. It was a really different world—pretty much all drumset all the time, which I loved. I played every possible opportunity there, whether it was for pay or not. I dug in and lived 24/7 playing drums in as many situations as I could possibly squeeze in.

My drumset teacher at Belmont was Dale Armstrong, and he was just this monstrous player, and a serious session musician—as were pretty much all the faculty. I would have to reschedule lessons all the time because Dale would be playing on some huge project. But being around teachers of that caliber, not to mention my ridiculously talented classmates, was the best real-world education I could have gotten. I graduated from Belmont University in 1992 and went to work at Fork's Drum Closet during the day as I tried to network and find a gig.

MD: Was Belmont important in getting you off on the right foot?

Will: Yes. Most of the people that I knew in school are now working professionals in the industry. You just knew that your classmates and peers were going to be the next group of movers and shakers. A lot of my friends from school are now producers, artists, and engineers who hire me for gigs.

MD: What was your first touring gig in Nashville?

Will: Right after graduation, while I was working at Fork's, I got a gig with a band called The Noisy Little Sunbeams. [laughs] Yes, I'm serious. They were a small band from Australia on the Benson label, and they were doing opening dates for The

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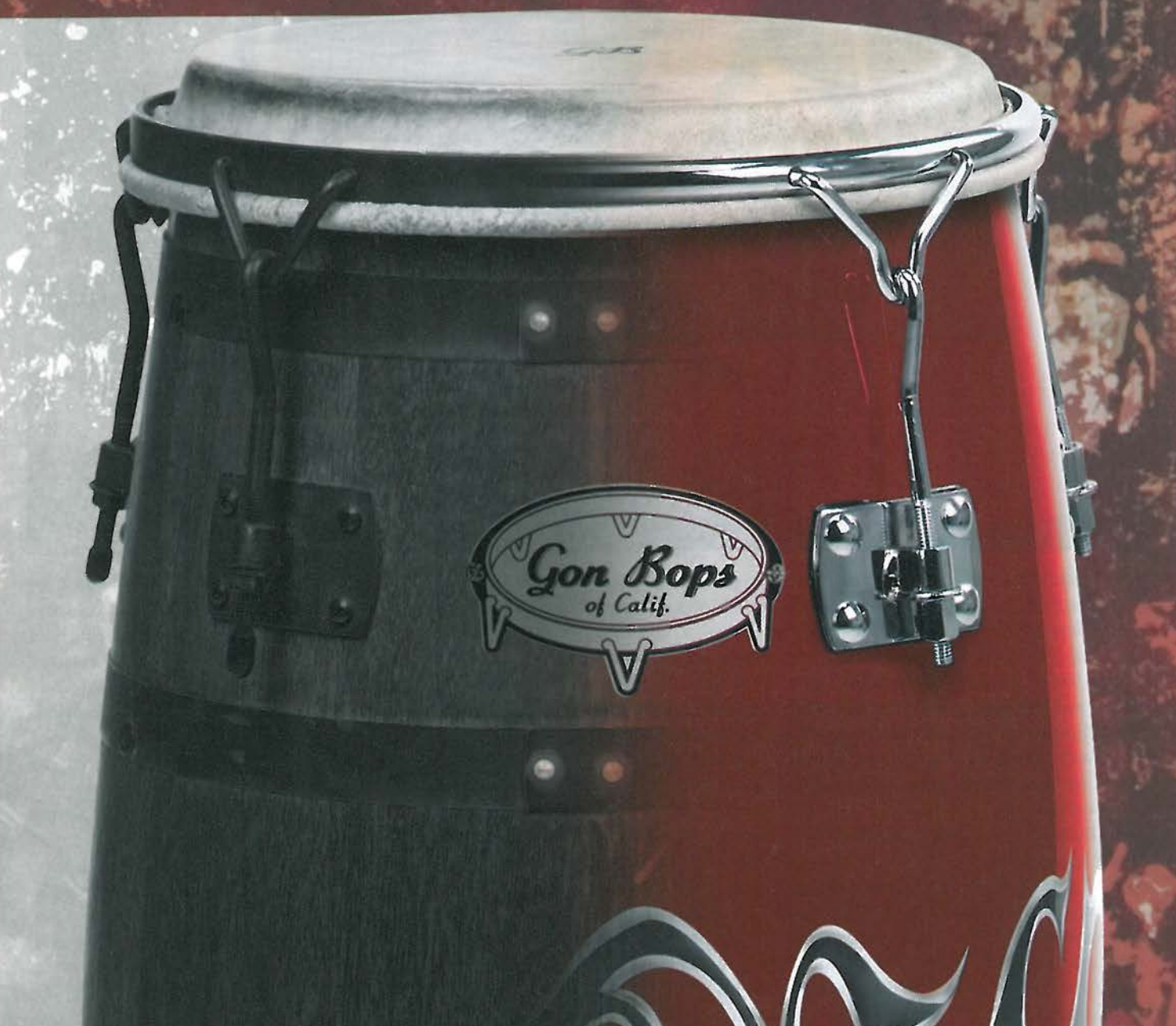

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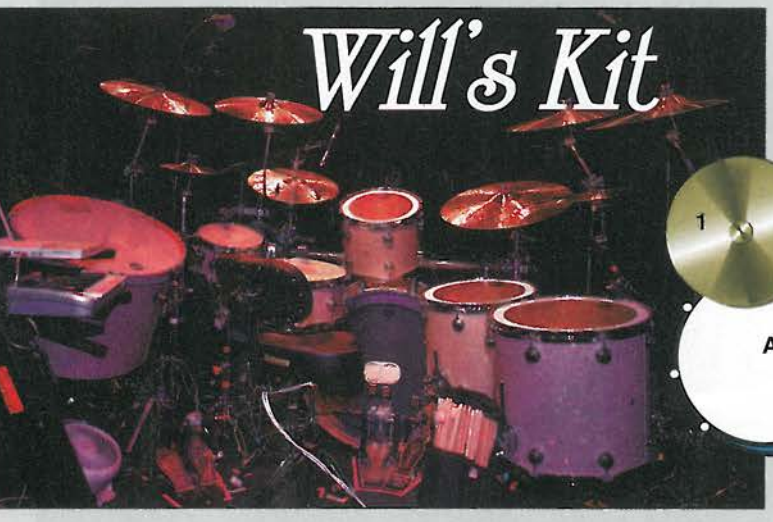
Will Denton

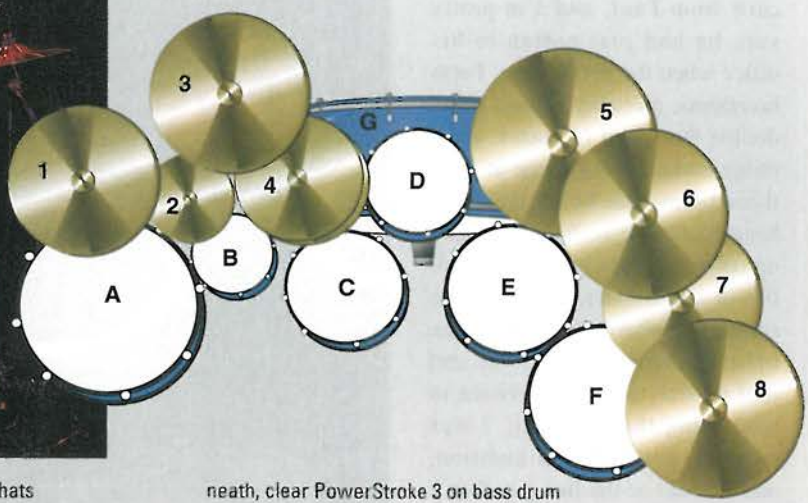
Newsboys, another Australian act that was a pretty well known band. I was glad just to hit the road, but we were definitely paying the ol' dues.

MD: How did you end up joining dc Talk?

Will: The wife of a co-worker at Fork's established the connection. She was a waitress at a restaurant in Brentwood, Tennessee, and she saw a lot of the Christian recording industry personnel coming through.

One night, as she was serving a customer, a conversation about the music industry developed and the man told her that they were auditioning drummers for a new backing band for dc Talk. She mentioned that her husband, Paul, worked at a drum shop in Nashville, and that he knew tons of drummers if they needed any suggestions. They politely thanked her for the offer and gave her a business card. When





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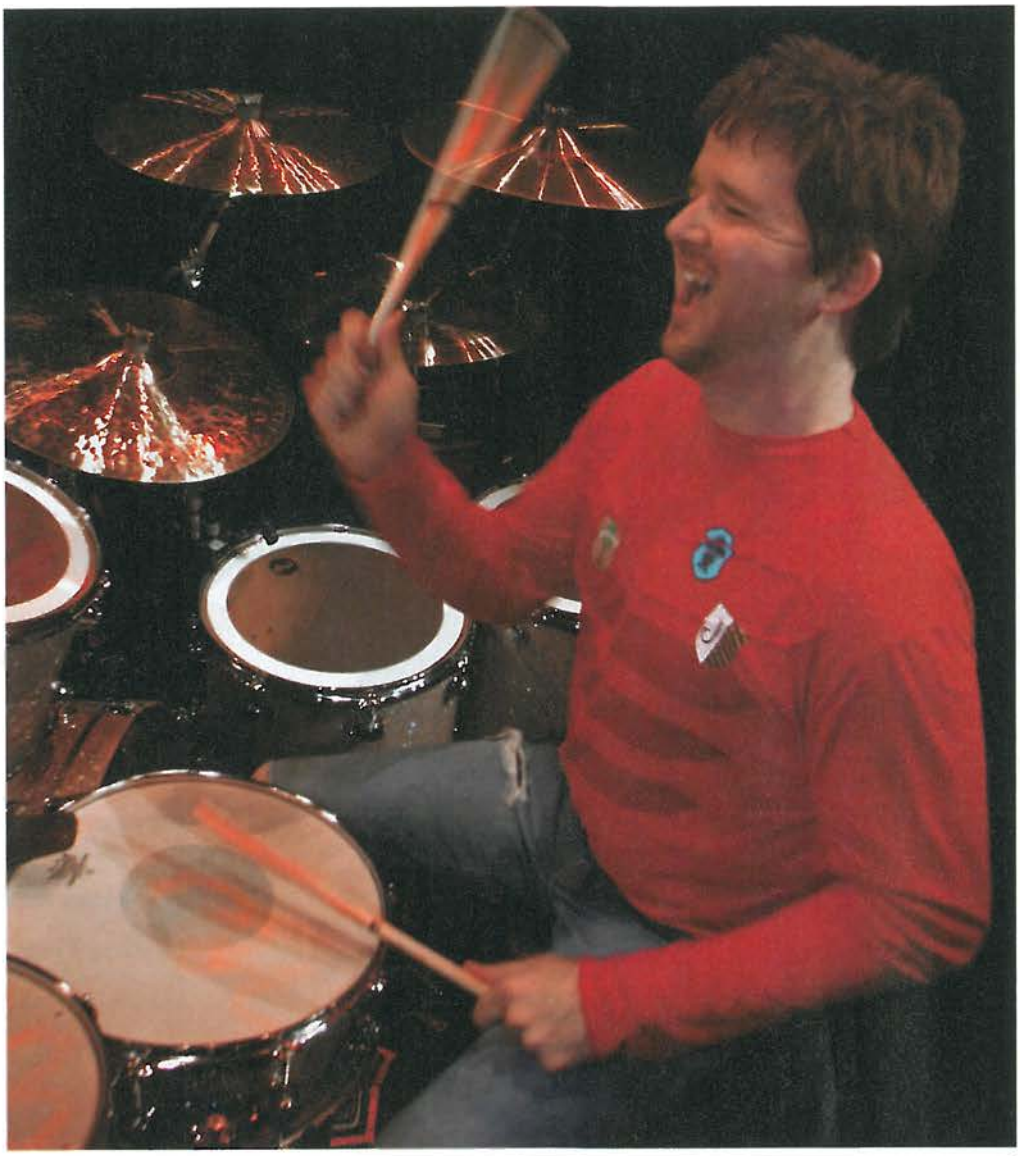
she got home, she gave the card to her husband and the next day he gave it to me.

MD: So you picked up the phone and just called?

Will: Definitely! First thing, next morning. Denny Keitzman was dc Talk's road manager, and he lived in Michigan at the time. He flew home that same morning I got the card from Paul, and I'm pretty sure he had just gotten to his office when the phone rang. I was breathless, probably talking about double the speed of sound, and I mispronounced his name at least three times. But being the kind-hearted man he is, he didn't hang up on me. He said they had a full list of auditioners, but for some reason—probably just to get me off the phone—he gave in and told me that they'd squeeze me in first thing that morning. I was stoked—my first real audition, and I would be the first guy they'd hear that day! Later I found out that this basically meant that I was going to be the soundcheck guy for the other drummers.

I learned four or five songs and went in and played them. It was pretty interesting, as I was just playing along with a CD of the album. I walked out grateful that I'd just gotten a chance to audi-



tion, but that was about it. About a week later, to my complete surprise, I got a call back to do another audition, this time with a full band. We played the songs that I'd learned for the first audition, and at the end of it, we got to play a twenty-minute jam at the end of a song. It felt really good. But it was still, "We'll let you know."

MD: That's a tough thing about auditions. You always have to wait.

Will: After about a week of checking my messages every ten minutes, I got this simple message: "Hey Will, you got the gig. Call us on Monday." Man, I *lost* it! I was in a restaurant at the time and leaped out of my chair, yelling, "I got the gig, I got the gig!" I was hugging and high-fiving complete strangers all over the restaurant. But since it was Nashville, I think people were used to that kind of behavior.

MD: What helped you make the jump from the practice room to the arena stage?

Will: Realizing that I really knew nothing about what I was doing! I think that the biggest challenge was learning how drums should be tuned for this completely foreign world I found myself in. I remember Tommy Wells [a well-known Nashville studio drummer and teacher] used to come into Fork's when I worked there, and his motto was this sort of "adapt or die" philosophy. Just from hanging out behind the counter and talking with him, I realized that here was a well-respected player who worked all the time, and he never had any hint of "my way or the highway" attitude. He was flexible, and tried to accommodate whatever demands were put on him. That just made a huge impression on me.

So when I started touring these big halls, it didn't take me long to figure out that the guys on the other side of the soundboard knew a whole lot more than I did about what worked with massive P.A. systems. So instead of saying, "Look, here's my kick drum sound, take it or leave it," I learned to trust others with my approach to tuning. And through it all, I came out with what I think is my own pretty unique sound that, hopefully, seems to work pretty well now.

MD: Did it change the rest of your surroundings very much to have such a high-profile gig?

Will: It seemed that once I had that gig and established myself as a person who was

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dependable and easy to live with on a tour bus, things started to snowball back at home. I never had a business card or a demo tape. I just felt that God would put me where I needed to be, and He always has.

MD: You got the gig, and it worked out great. But what about between tours? With salaries being what they are, I don't know a lot of sidemen who can afford to take off the next few months.

Will: At one point at the end of the first tour, I got the feeling that I needed to be looking for work, so I got on the phone and started doing the Nashville thing. Nothing happened. It took me a while to put two and two together, but I finally figured that I hadn't gotten this gig on my own in the first place. So I just put my faith in God and the phone hasn't stopped ringing since. I've been working steadily for twelve years with jobs coming to me as I needed them.

MD: So what *did* you do between the first and second tours?

Will: After the first dc Talk tour, I wound up doing some temp work at Sparrow Records, making copies in an office and being a general gopher. You quickly learn that the music business is very relationship-oriented, Nashville especially. From my time at Sparrow, I became good friends with people in artist management, and just being on their radar resulted in later auditions that I would end up getting. Susan Ashton's *A Distant Call* tour in the fall of 1997 was a perfect example. She was a Sparrow artist, and when it came time to put her band together, one of my friends at the label remembered that not only did I make a fabulous cup of coffee [laughs], I also played drums every now and then.

MD: From big tours to office gopher. That's quite a switch!

Will: Yeah, coming off an arena tour where I'd played for several hundred thousand people and going into temp work at a record company was a pretty big change. I was bummed a bit, but in the end, the relationships that were formed as a result of that time doing grunt work have been a real blessing.

MD: You came into dc Talk at a fortunate time.

Will: Yes, stylistically they were transitioning between rap, hip-hop, and rock, and I grew up being a huge rock fan. But being a small-town kid from south Georgia, I felt like a fish out of water around all these hip-hoppers. But my rock edge probably helped the band as they made major changes, which sent them in the very same direction that I had come from. The band already had a couple of albums out: *dc Talk*, *Nu Thang*, and finally a big breakout album called *Free At Last*, which was one of the biggest-selling albums in Christian music up to that point. The follow up album, *Jesus Freak*, was even bigger than that. It was a great band to play drums for. The groove was so big and fat—I really had a great time playing with the bass player, Otto Price.

MD: How long did you play with the band?

Will: The first tour was backing up Michael W. Smith in 1992. I stayed with the band through the *Welcome To The Freak Show* tour in 1996.

MD: What made you decide to leave?

Will: It was a really hard decision to make. The band was my first real touring gig, and I loved working with them. But at the end of the *Freak Show* tour, I was just in a place where I was wondering what would be next and where I was supposed to be. And again, God just really surprised me.

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Will Denton

Not long after the tour wrapped up, I got a call to audition for Steven Curtis Chapman.

MD: That's like falling out of the frying pan with one of the most successful alt/pop Christian rock bands and into the fire with one of the most successful adult contemporary Christian artists. I'll bet that took some getting used to.

Will: I came in at such a good time. My first tour with Steven was the 1996 *Signs Of Life* tour, which is still one of my favorite albums of his. His sound had really changed with that record—it was a gutsy, raw record and it rocked. The band I found myself working with was an amazing group of musicians as well, and Steven is one of the most genuine guys I've ever met.

Not long after the tour finished, we had the opportunity to be involved in the studio with Steven, which also speaks volumes about the kind of guy he is. I'd been a sideman my entire time in Nashville, and I'd never been an actual member of a band. So getting a chance to record with the artist I was backing made it feel that much more like a family.

MD: It's pretty unusual for a successful artist to change directions that drastically. How did you wind up playing on the albums?

Will: Steven really went to bat for us with the record label, and we all went over to Abbey Road Studios to record the next album. We set up in the studio and recorded four or five songs live in one pass, with no overdubs! It was a big boost for us professionally because we got credit for doing the studio work as well. After that, we were involved in the creative process of recording the next four albums, which has been such a satisfying thing. It was a leap of faith for him to trust his road band and take us into the studio, but it seems like things have worked.

MD: He sounds like a great guy to work for.

Will: Steven is a musician's musician. He's an incredible guitar player with a gift for songwriting that really comes across, whether he's playing with the band or doing a guitar/vocal thing.

MD: It sounds like you've really found a home with Steven, and his career just seems to keep building. I would imagine that it keeps you away from home a lot. How do you keep yourself healthy on the road?

Will: For the last tour, I've managed to stay healthy by really watching what I eat. I don't do too much exercise on the road because I'm so active with playing every day. But I do supplement my diet with as much fresh produce as I can. I drink at least one serving of Dr. Schultze's SuperFood Formula every day, which I mix with fresh fruit and juices, and it's kept me going while just about everyone else on the tour came down with one thing or another.

MD: Why is it so important to eat like that?

Will: When you're on a bus with other people, and one gets sick, most of the others get sick, too. This is the first tour where I've stayed healthy the whole time.

MD: Do you practice when you're on tour?

Will: It's weird. I've always carried a practice pad and a few method books on the road with me, but I've never been able to consistently practice while touring. It's sort of that Catch-22 of working all the time but never being able to do anything other than

the work-related stuff.

I do a dedicated twenty-minute warm-up before the show starts, with rudiments and lots of stretching. But that's about the extent of things. However, when I'm home, I absolutely love Zoro's *Commandments Of R&B Drumming* book and videos—that has just got to be one of the most exhaustively researched and well thought out educational tools out there. Z is the man!

MD: How does your family relate to your work?

Will: When my wife and I were dating, I was on a dc Talk tour, so she got a realistic look at what life would be like if she married me. Luckily for us, unless the band is touring on the West Coast, we're home every week at least a couple of days. I *am* out for several days at a time. But when I'm home, I'm home, so I have all of my time available for my family.

At this point in my life, I wouldn't take a tour that would take me away from my family for a really extended length of time. I have two young daughters, and I really want to be around them as much as possible.

MD: What kind of drums do you play?

Will: I became a DW endorser last August. I love my DWs! They're huge-sounding drums.

I've got a combination of maple and birch shells on the kit. I just love the way the birch toms—with no reinforcing rings—just pound you in the chest. But I also dig the solid maple snares and maple kick drums. So that's how I arrived at the hybrid wood choices. And the gong tom—oh man, it just shakes the stage. I keep telling our sound guy that I won't be fully satisfied until someone in the audience loses a filling. [laughs]

MD: This is not what I'd call a typical set of drums, with a 26" bass drum and a gong tom.

Will: That's true. But I really like bigger drums. They add a whole other layer of depth and power to the sound. Plus it feels great to be behind those monsters. I take a lot of ribbing from the sound guy and Steven about suffering from some drumming Napoleon complex. [laughs]

I also really like my hi-hat setup on tour. I'm using a remote hat, placed almost directly in front of the snare drum, where I can play "open handed." I'm a left-handed guy who learned to play a right-handed setup, and I've suffered through the years playing with my arms crossed in the traditional fashion. But having the hats in front of me, I can play without having to cross my arms. I wish I had thought of this years ago.

MD: You have a Mac laptop and a small keyboard as part of your setup. Are you firing any samples from the drums?

Will: No. I'm not using any triggers to replace or sweeten the live drum sound. What you hear out front from me is pure drums. But I do control the click track and a few loops that are added to the mix on some songs. For that I use a Macintosh G4 iBook with Ableton's Live 4 software to fire some loops and sound effects. I also use an M-Audio Oxygen 8 keyboard to fire each track. Each key corresponds with a song on the set list. The click and any loops for any song are together and controlled by that keyboard. That's mounted on an Ultimate Support keyboard rack along with the Ibook.

MD: You've been a sideman with Steven

Curtis Chapman for almost ten years now. Do you have any plans for life after this gig?

Will: I write a regular column for *Christian Musician* magazine, and I share a lot at my clinics about the trend of remote recording and how to do it. It's one of my primary sources of income outside the Chapman gig. In fact, I've gotten really involved in how drums are recorded. You have to make a strong commitment and a substantial investment in equipment and in learning how to use it to do the home recording thing, but it's totally worth it.

MD: How does remote recording work?

Will: In the last two or three years, I've been able to do a lot of recording work with other bands via the Internet and Pro Tools. I built a home studio and learned how to mike my drums pretty well. By making myself available on my Web site, I've been getting files via email that people have recorded. They send me notes detailing what they want in terms of drum parts, and I record them and send them back. I get paid via *Paypal*, so I never even meet most of these people.

MD: I've heard of a couple of other drummers basically "phoning in their parts" via the Internet in the same way. Why do you think it's becoming so popular?

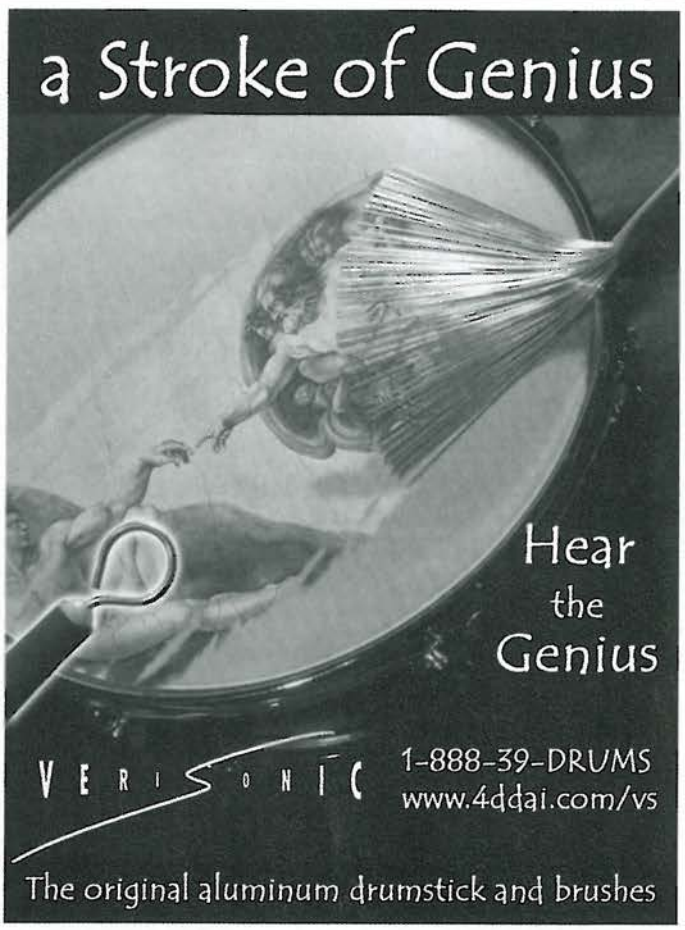
Will: There are lots of people who can afford to pay a drummer the day rate for a record, but can't afford to fly to Nashville, pay for housing and meals, rent a studio, and record. This is a completely viable way of getting the job done in a much more affordable fashion.

MD: It sounds like you've followed your dream to the point where your dream has become your day-to-day life. What advice would you offer to young drummers who want to pursue a career like yours?

Will: Oh, man—I'll soapbox on this. Rule 1: "Be A Nice Person," which also happens to be Rules 2 to 10 as well. I mean, learning your instrument and having the ability to play is just a given. But people skills are such an important part of being a working musician. People will hire you for more than just your chops, trust me. They want you to make them look good on stage and off. You might be the next big thing in the music world, but please do us all a favor and don't act like it. Anybody with technical skills can pull off a performance. But your personality, your passion for what you do, and your ability to be a real person with a positive vibe is what makes you hirable.

I'd also suggest that anyone considering a career in music pick up a copy of Dave Ramsey's *Financial Peace* book and learn to be financially responsible from the beginning. If you make fifty grand on your first tour and then go blow it all on a Hummer, you're not going to survive. I know it sounds like simple math, but musicians in particular seem to have serious difficulties with the concept of living within one's means.

Faith in God's provision, people skills, performance ability, and the ability to take care of business will ensure that you will work steadily and have a long and happy career, regardless of whether it's music, medicine, or wherever He leads you in the end. I just want my life to genuinely reflect the love of God to others around me. Hey, gold and platinum records hanging on the wall are nice, but what I really hope is that a lot of people will show up for my funeral one day. That will mean more to me than anything.



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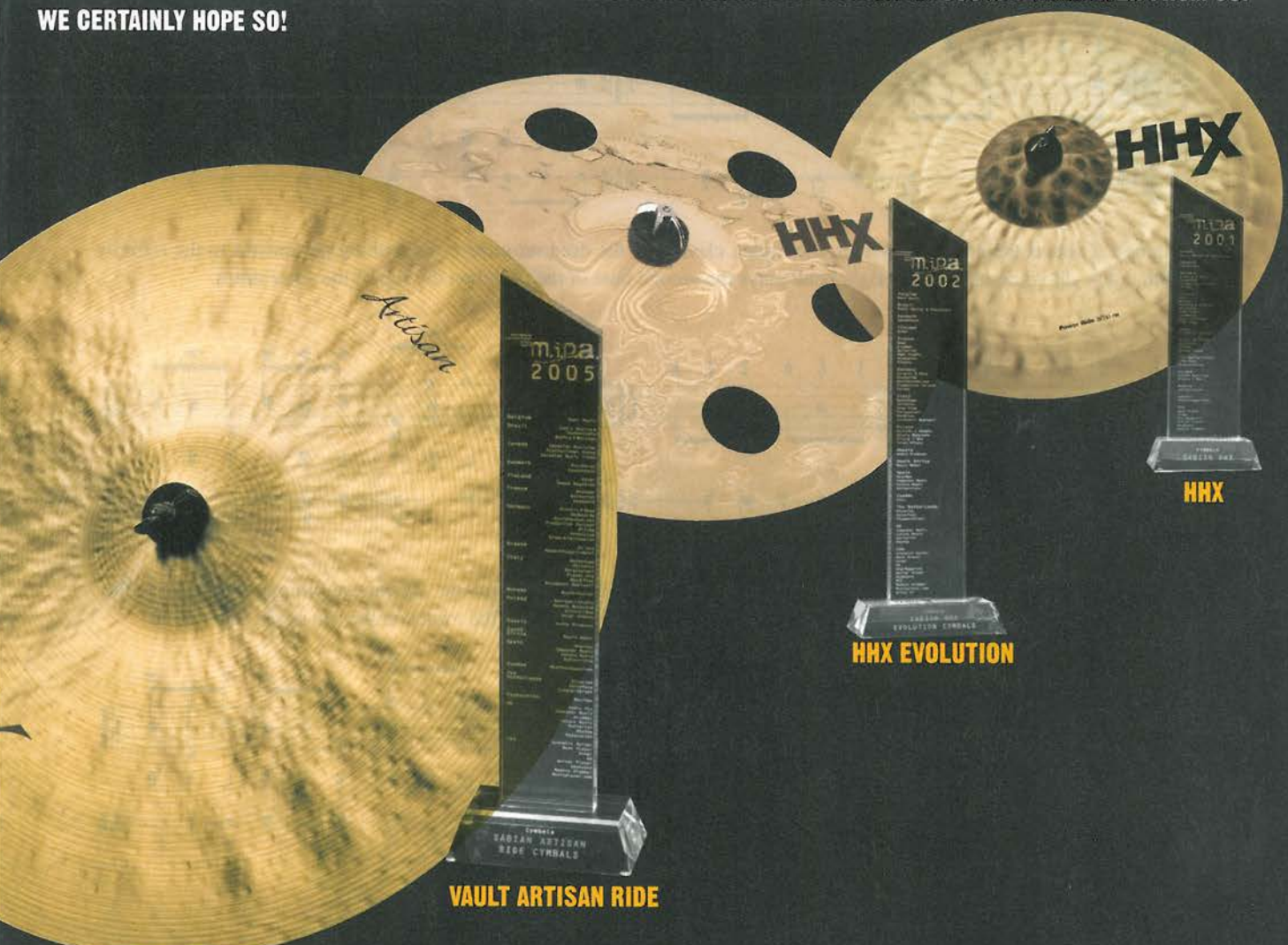

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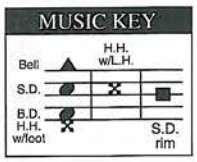
Secrets Of 6/8

Three Grooves

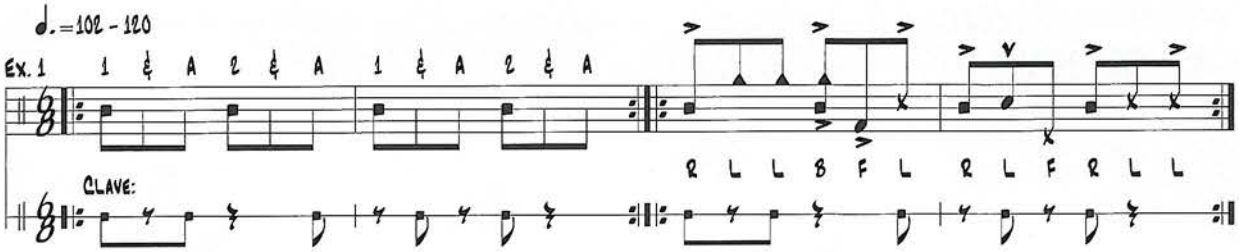
by David Garibaldi

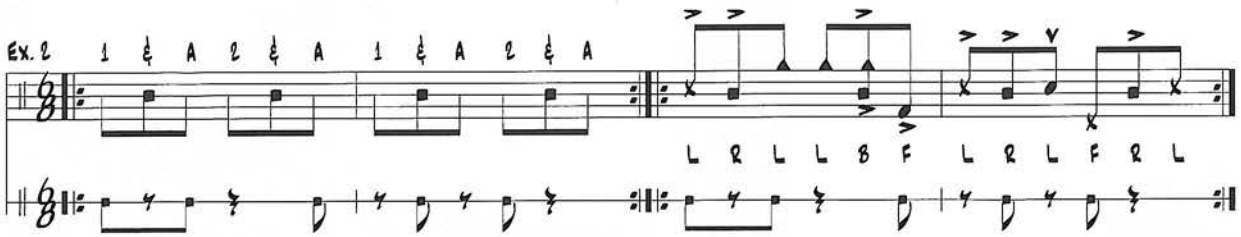


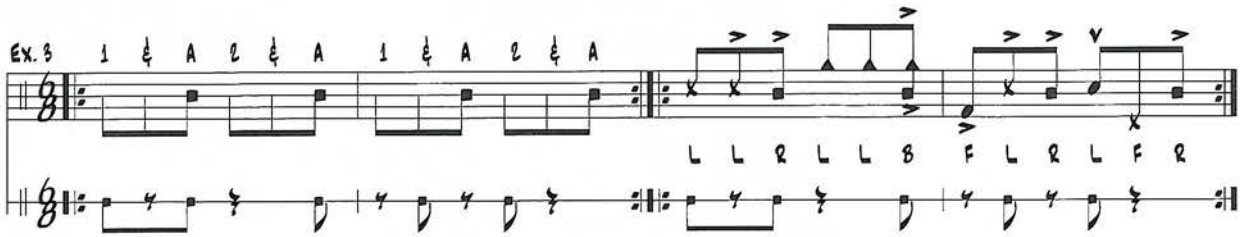
Guiro, bembé, rumba Columbia, abacuá, arará, palo, as well as many batá rhythms are among the many African-based folkloric styles that feature 6/8. These rhythms, which are very melodic, can be simple or complex, and are performed on a variety of percussion instruments.

Traditionally, the drumset isn't included, so any drumset applications must be invented. My concept of this is to take some of the traditional percussion parts or concepts and combine them with hi-hat, snare drum, and bass drum to create funk beats. In the 6/8 context, I create grooves with triplets instead of 16th notes.

The following study is based on one idea, and then expanded rhythmically and melodically by using the permutation concept. Each example includes the 6/8 clave rhythm to illustrate how each groove fits with clave, and is intended to be used for reference.

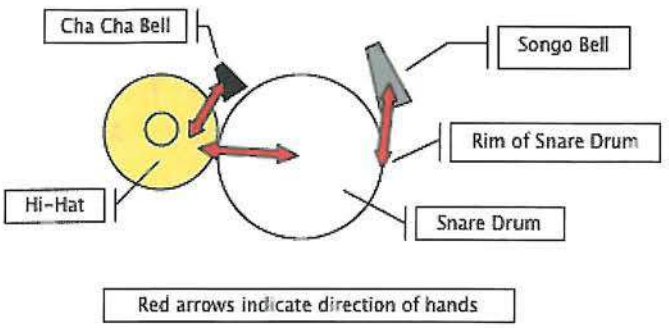
Example 1 is the basic idea. This example shows the counting system, the triplet, clave, and the drumset groove. The right hand plays the first note of the triplet on the rim of the snare drum. (While the right hand plays the rim of the snare drum, the left plays the bell, hi-hat, and snare drum. The right foot plays the bass drum and the left plays the hi-hat.)

Example 2 shows the counting system, the triplet, clave, and the drumset groove. Everything permutates to the right by one 8th note—all voices move. The right hand plays the second note of the triplet on the rim of the snare drum.



Example 3 shows the counting system, the triplet, clave, and the drumset groove. Again, everything permutates to the right by one 8th note—all voices move. The right hand plays the third note of the triplet on the rim of the snare drum.

The remaining examples take each of the three previous exercises and permutates each one by a dotted quarter note (which equals three 8th notes). Compare Example 1A with 1B. The last three 8th notes in 1A (which equal one dotted quarter note) are moved to the front of the exercise to produce 1B. This concept is applied to each of the remaining examples.

Performance Notes

• Refer to the following illustration to get a visual on how the hands will move during each example.



• Counting aloud is essential in building the ability to *hear* the permutations in relation to clave.

• The basic pulse is the same as a blues shuffle, except that you're using all of the triplets to build the grooves.

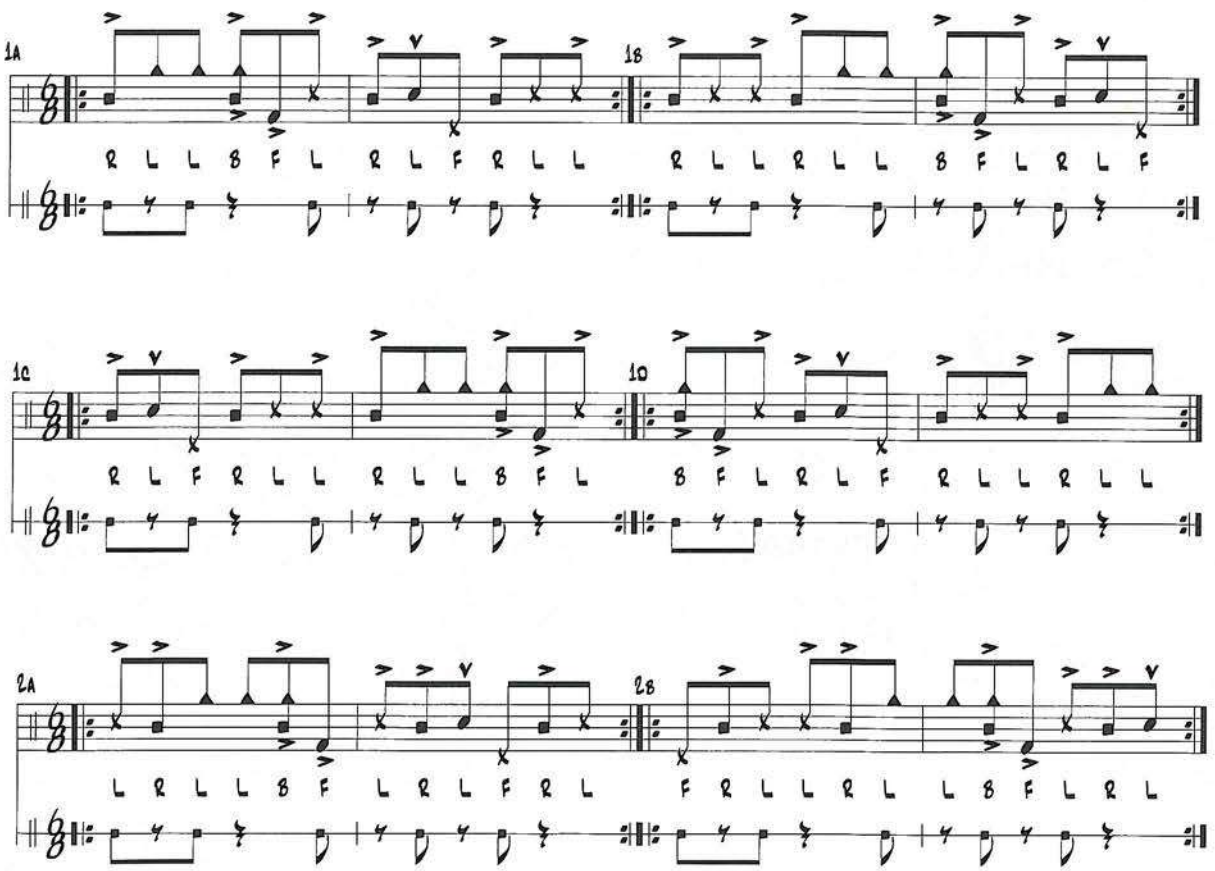
• Repetition is a very important key to these examples! Repeat Example 1 until you can count comfortably while playing it. Then move to Example 2.

• Sing clave while playing the exercises.

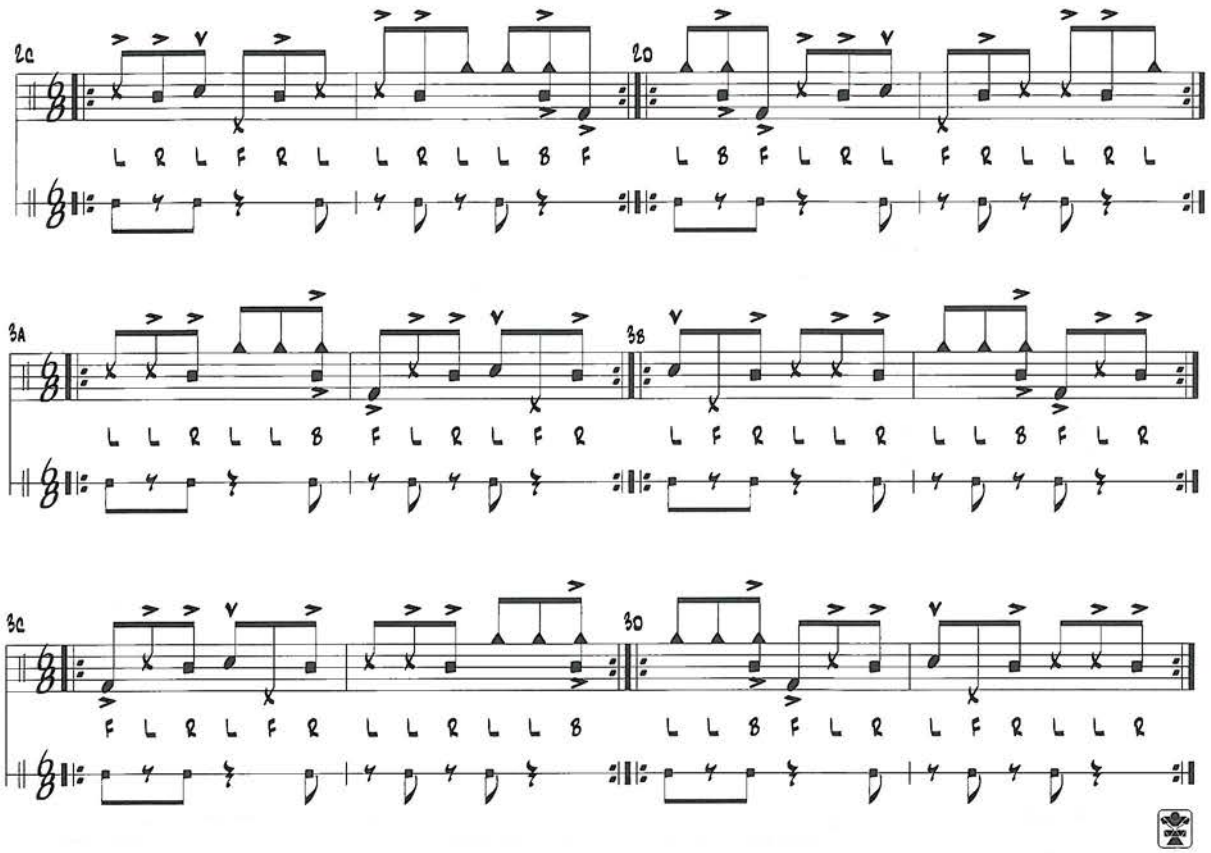
• Try the following with the right hand:

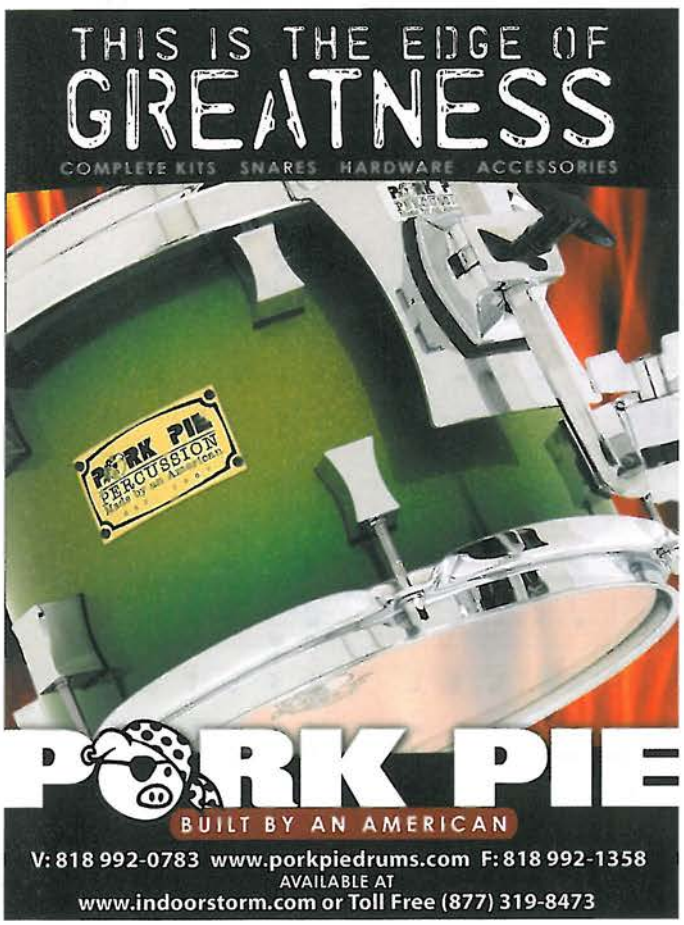
1. Instead of playing the rim of the snare drum, substitute a songo bell.

2. Alternate the right hand part between the rim of the snare drum and the songo bell. (Bell on beat 1, rim on beat 2; rim on beat 1, bell on beat 2.)

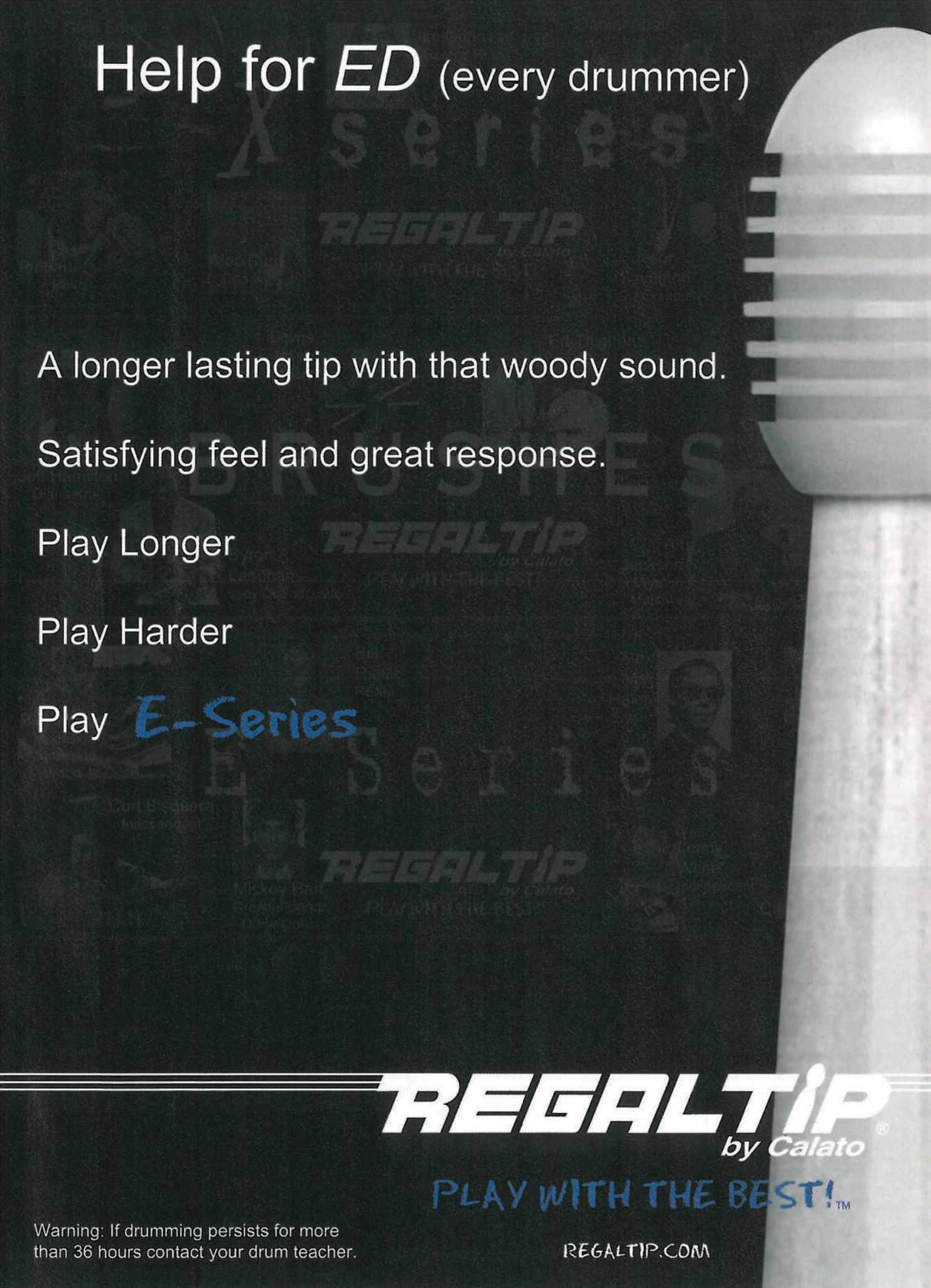


David Garibaldi





Help for *ED* (every drummer)



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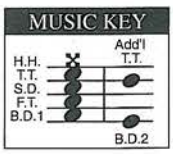
Double Bass Drumming

Part 10: Polyrhythmic Fills

by Rod Morgenstein



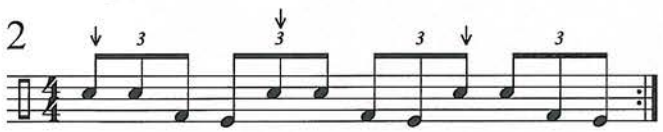
Playing around with time is something I've always enjoyed exploring. Let's take a look at how we can manipulate some of the double bass fills we've dealt with so far in this series.

The very first 16th-note pattern we worked on consisted of two RL hand strokes followed by two RL foot strokes.

1

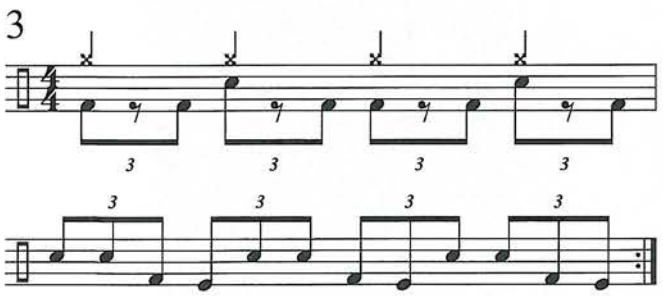
This pattern (sometimes referred to as "quads") is perhaps the most popular double bass lick on planet earth. What if, however, each of these strokes was approached as 8th-note triplets? Example 2 demonstrates this concept. The arrows, placed above specific notes, show where the four-note pattern (originally 16ths but now triplets) repeats. Play this exercise slowly while counting "1, 2, 3, 4" out loud. This will help you get the feel of this polyrhythmic concept down. (The polyrhythm created by this repeated four-note lick is three-against-four, and the notes directly under the arrows represent half-note triplets.)

2

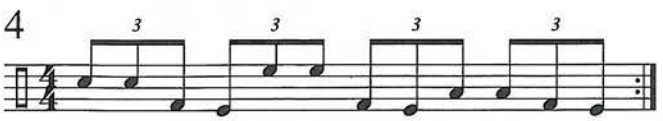


Let's see how this pattern sounds in context. Play a one-measure shuffle beat followed by the pattern.

3



Examples 4 and 5 orchestrate the fill between the snare and toms. Example 5 has the first hand stroke accented, which really brings out the three-against-four polyrhythm.

4

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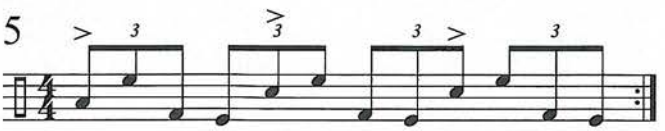
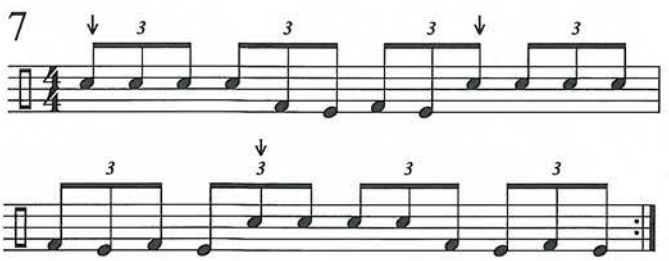

Another 16th-note pattern we've studied is Example 6, which consists of four RLRL hand strokes followed by four RLRL foot strokes.

6

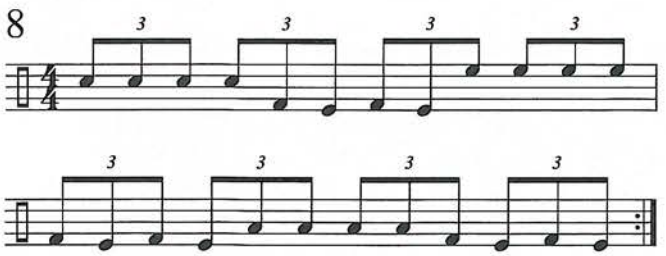
If you convert these 16th notes to 8th-note triplets, we have the following. The arrows above the specific notes show where the eight-note pattern repeats. Again, be sure to count "1, 2, 3, 4" out loud. It's the best way to fully grasp the polyrhythm that's being created.

7



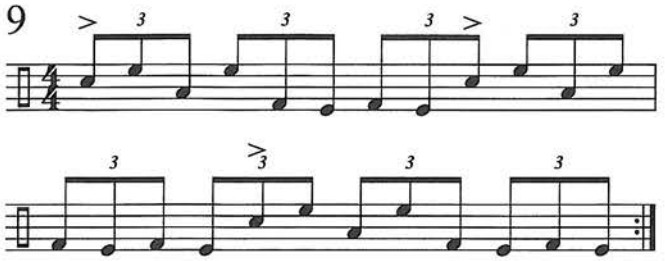
Now play a two-measure shuffle groove (something similar to the one in Example 3) followed by this fill.

8

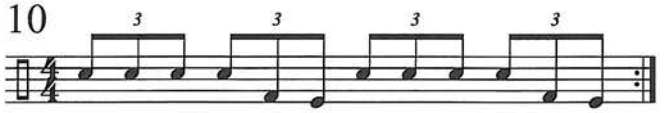


Example 9 is an orchestration of the same fill, with the first note of the eight-note pattern accented.

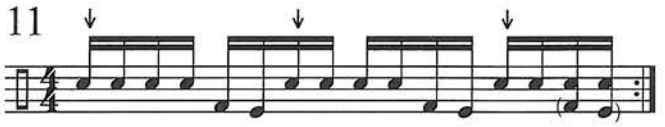
9



Previously, we also worked on a six-note triplet pattern.

10

If this six-note pattern is written out as 16ths, we have the following. (Again, the arrows above certain notes designate the beginning of a new, repeating six-note lick.)

11

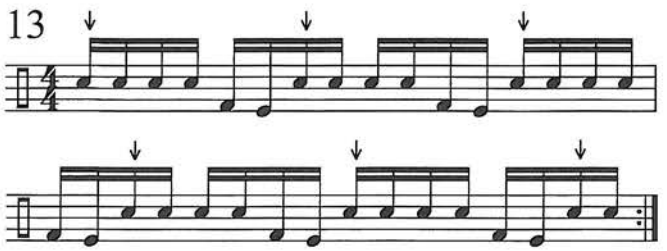


Example 12 is an orchestration of Example 11. (The bass drum notes in parentheses at the end of the measure suggest an optional choice of which drums to play.)

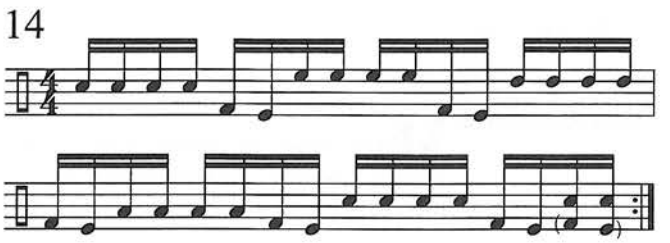
12

Exercises 13 and 14 extend the six-note pattern to a two-measure phrase. Notice how the phrase plays "over the barline," in that the downbeat of measure 2 begins with the fifth note of the six-note lick. (The arrows clearly illustrate where the pattern repeats.) The reason for this is that a measure of 4/4 consists of sixteen 16th notes. A repeated six-note, 16th-based pattern does not fit exactly into one measure. This creates exciting musical tension.

13

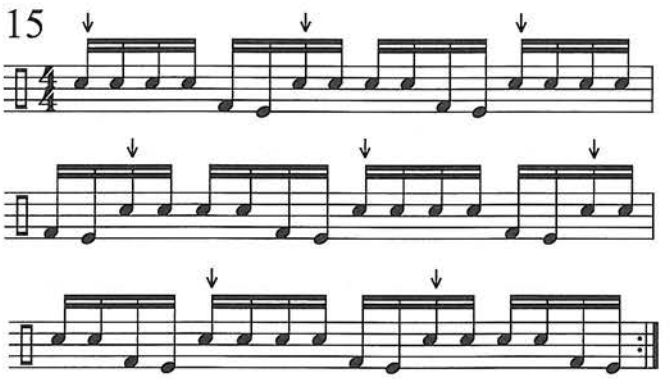


14

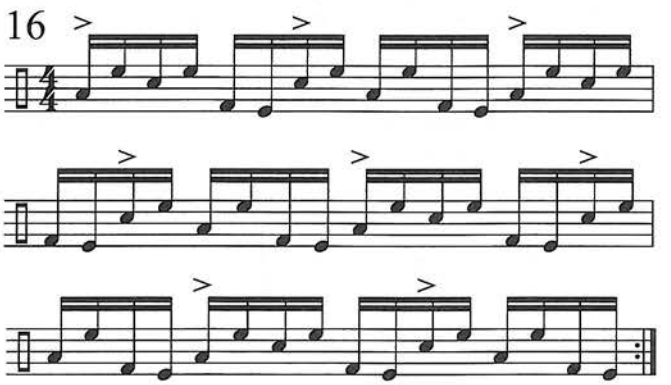


A repeated six-note, 16th-based pattern also doesn't fit exactly into two measures of 4/4, as there are thirty-two 16th notes in two measures, and six doesn't divide evenly into thirty-two. However, six *does* fit perfectly into three measures of 4/4, as there are forty-eight 16th notes in total. Example 15 demonstrates how the lick can be played exactly eight times in three measures of 4/4.

15



Example 16 has the first note of the pattern accented, which helps bring out a two-against-three polyrhythm.

16

It's important to remember that a lot of mileage can be gotten out of a handful of patterns. This article simply focused on three hand/foot patterns from previous articles. We just put a different spin on them.

Drum on!

Flams And Flam Rudiments

Part 1: Interesting Applications For Jazz

by Ari Hoenig

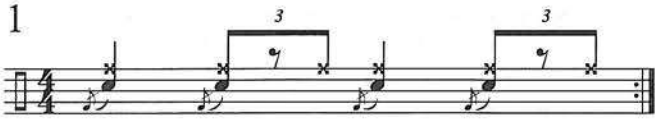
MUSIC KEY

R.C.
S.D.
B.D.

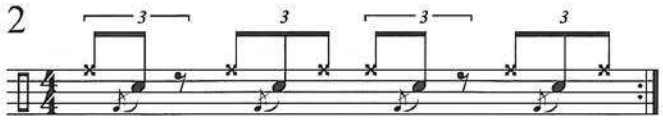
Originating with rudimental drumming, flams have been an integral part of the drum language for many years. They've been commonly used in all kinds and styles of music. But for some reason flams are almost always played with the hands and are hardly ever played between the hands and feet.

In this article we'll explore some possibilities using these bass drum/snare drum flams in a jazz-triplet context. Be patient, as these take some time to get used to. However, they sound great once you master them.

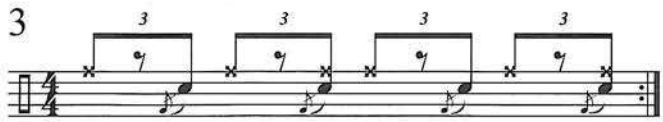
The basic rudiment we'll work with is a non-alternating left flam, played "rL" (right, left). Note that the "r" is played on the bass drum and "L" is played on the snare.

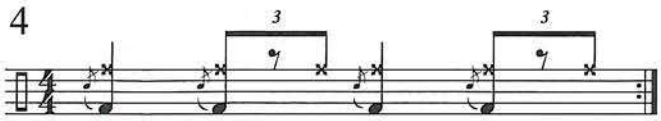
1

In Example 2, the flam is on the second note of the triplet.

2



Example 3 has the flam played on the third note of the triplet.

3

In Examples 4–6, we'll do the same thing as in Examples 1–3, but with non-alternating right flams, "lR" (left, right). Again, "R" signifies the bass drum and "l" the snare.

4

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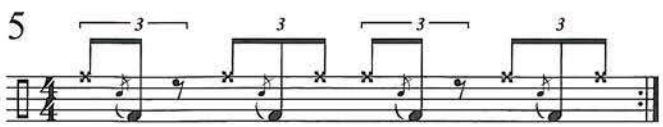

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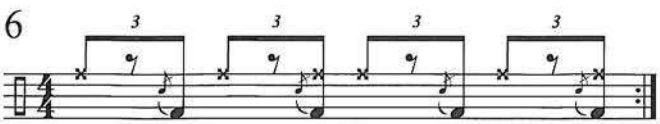
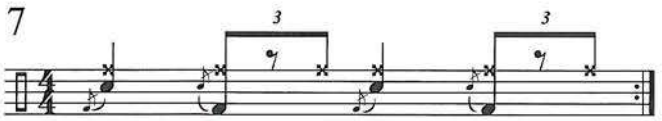

Examples 7–9 are rhythmically the same but alternate the stickings ("rL, lR").

7

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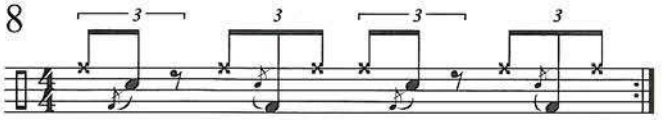

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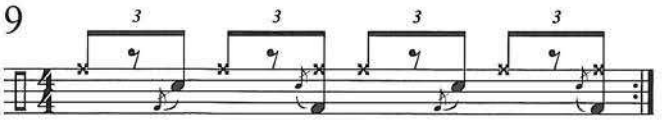
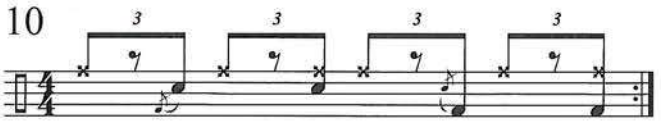


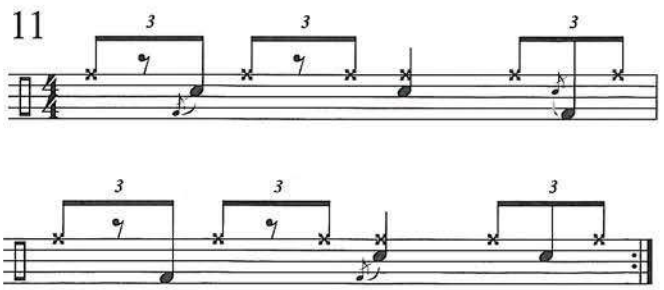
You can continue this process with flam taps, as in Example 10, and expand on it rhythmically.

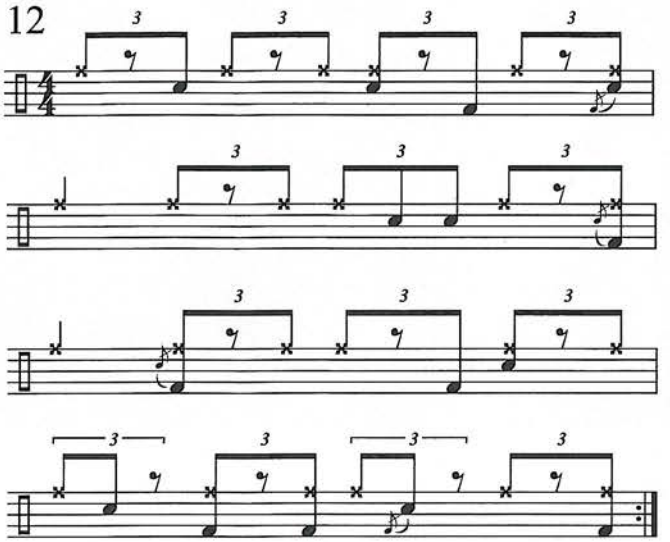
10



Most of these exercises are meant to be used for practice. Examples 11 and 12 show some ways they can be incorporated musically into time playing.

11

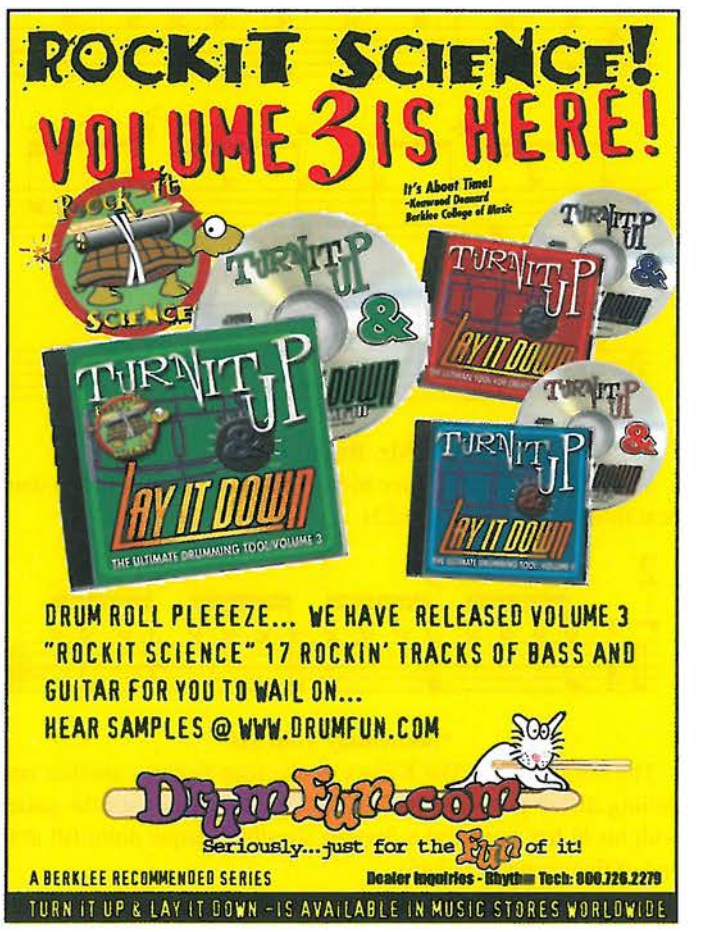




You can use the same rule of R = bass drum and L = snare drum for any rudimental literature that has notated stickings.

Next time we'll expand on this concept by using some other flam rudiments. See you then.

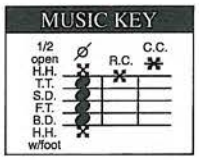
Ari Hoenig is a top New York jazz drummer. He currently works with Kenny Werner, Wayne Krantz, Jean-Michel Pilc, Chris Potter, and Kurt Rosenwinkel. Ari also leads his own band on Monday nights at New York City jazz club Smalls.



The Killers' Ronnie Vannucci

Hot Fuss

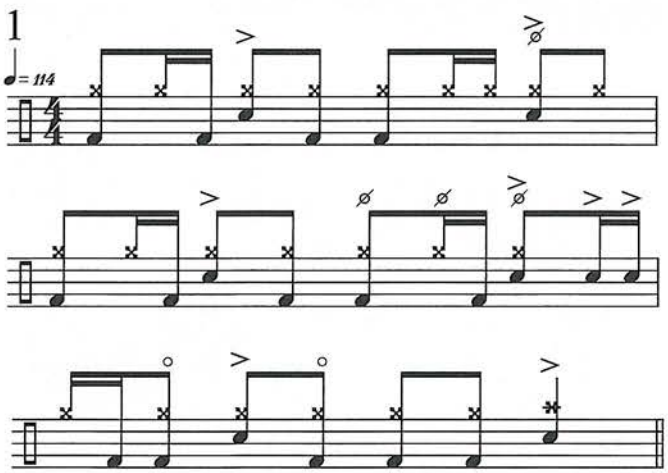
by Ed Breckenfeld



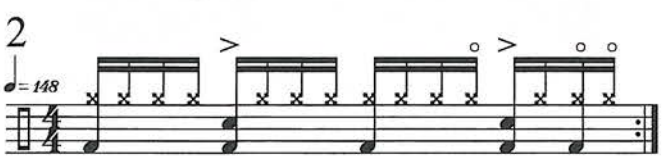
The debut album from The Killers continues to be a hot commodity since its release last year. This Las Vegas quartet has found the perfect balance between the garage band grind of The Strokes and the pop dance-ability of Duran Duran. But Ronnie Vannucci's drumming displays a slightly more sophisticated approach than your average post-punk basher. Sprinkled throughout *Hot Fuss* are glimpses of strong drum technique filtered through tasteful restraint. It's a killer combination.

"Jenny Was A Friend Of Mine"

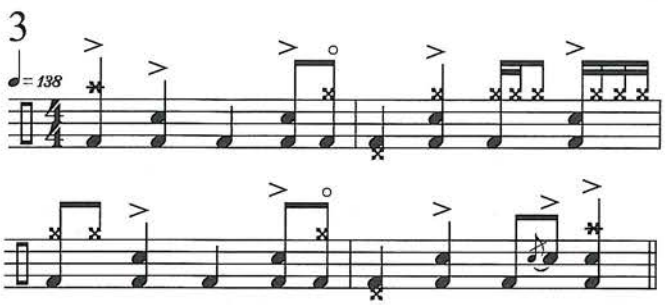
The intro and verse groove from the album's lead track contains a cool little rhythmic twist, shown here at the end of the second measure and continuing into the third. (0:27)



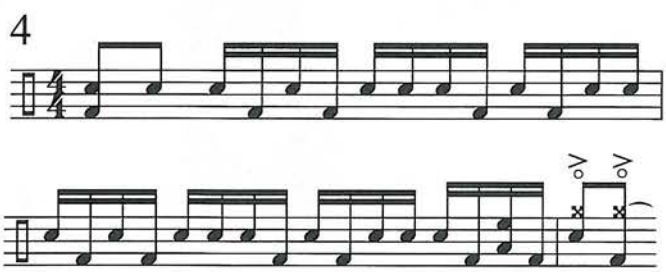
"Mr. Brightside"

Vannucci shows some nice hi-hat control in the classic fast dance beat from this hit single. (0:22)

"Somebody Told Me"

The song that put The Killers on the map features another compelling dance groove. Look at how Ronnie spices up the pattern with his hi-hat work and a Stewart Copeland-esque drum fill at the end of this sequence. (0:45)

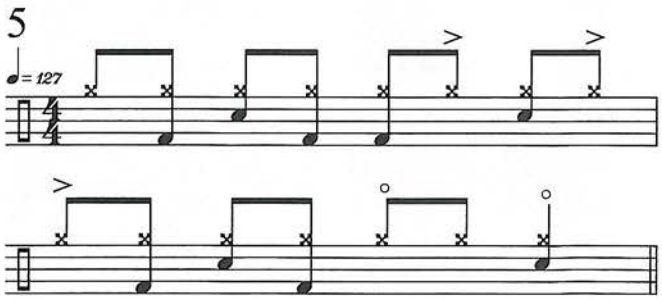


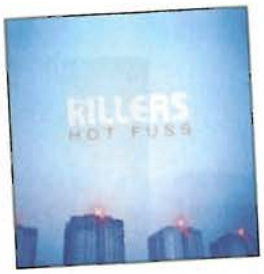
The song climaxes with this great two-bar kick/snare fill. (3:10)



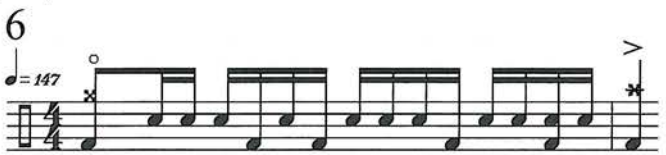
"On Top"

Here's an 8th-note groove from the verse of the tune that has some interesting give-and-take between the kick drum and hi-hat. (0:30)

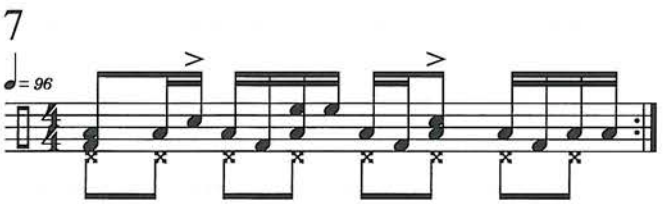




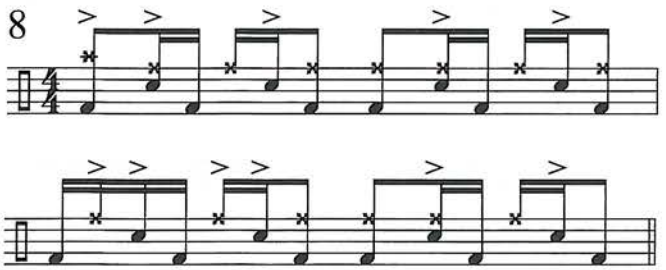
"Change Your Mind"

This track is loaded with Vannucci's signature snare and bass drum fills, like the following, which leads into the last chorus. (2:41)

"Believe Me Natalie"

Ronnie creates an infectious tom groove at the top of this song, with his snares turned off to add a primal element to the feel. (0:24)



The chorus beat is just as good, with a nice ride cymbal variation at the top of measure two. (2:22)



You can contact Ed Breckenfeld through his Web site: www.edbreckenfeld.com.

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Rudimental Warm-Ups

With A Latin Twist

by Maria Martinez

MUSIC KEY

R.C.
S.D.
B.D.
H.H. w/foot

This lesson will introduce you to some Latin-flavored warm-up exercises from my newly released book/CD package, *Rudimental Warm-Ups*, published by Hal Leonard. These exercises, based on the flam tap, flamacue, and paradiddle rudiments, will help expand your rhythmic vocabulary in a creative and musical way. I've also provided a few bass drum and hi-hat ostinatos to play underneath each exercise that will help develop coordination. Once you're comfortable with the sticking variations, you'll be able to place flams anywhere in the measure with ease.

As you practice these exercises, keep in mind the following suggestions:

1. When playing flams, you shouldn't hear two separate notes (the grace note *and* the full stroke). Instead, you should hear one full-sounding stroke. This is achieved by striking the grace note slightly before the full stroke that immediately follows.

2. The position of the grace note is about $^1/_4$" off the surface of the snare head, while the main note begins in an up position to allow a full down-stroke motion. Also, play all unaccented strokes approximately $^1/_4$" off the surface of the drumhead.

3. During practice, watch your sticks or use a mirror so you can match the stick height and motion of each flam.

4. Never lift your arms. Instead, use full wrist strokes for the accents.

Now, let's begin by repeating each of the exercises until you're comfortable with the stickings.

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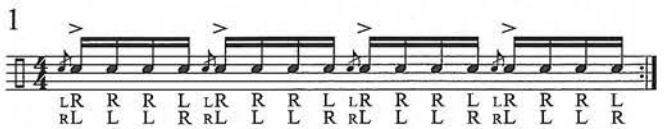
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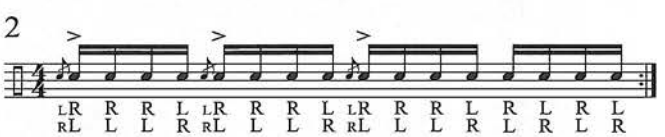
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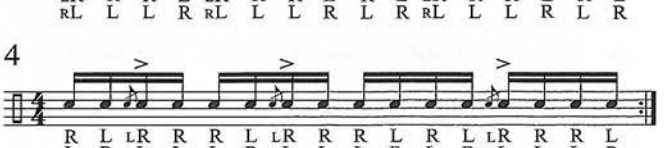
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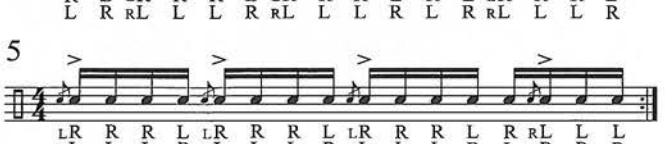
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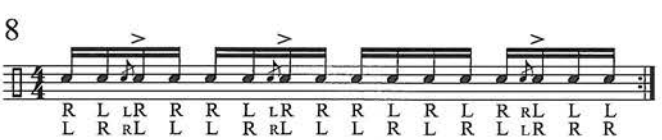

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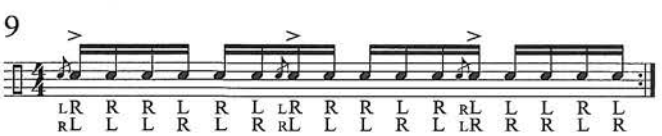


10

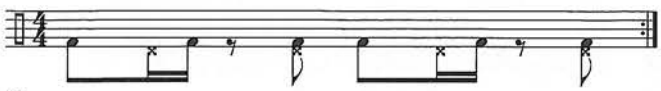
11

12

Once you're familiar with the stickings, choose one of the following bass drum and hi-hat ostinatos to play underneath each exercise.

A

B



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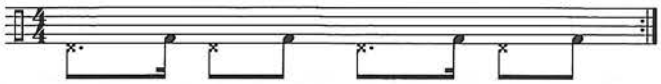
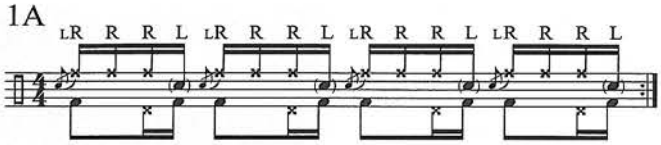
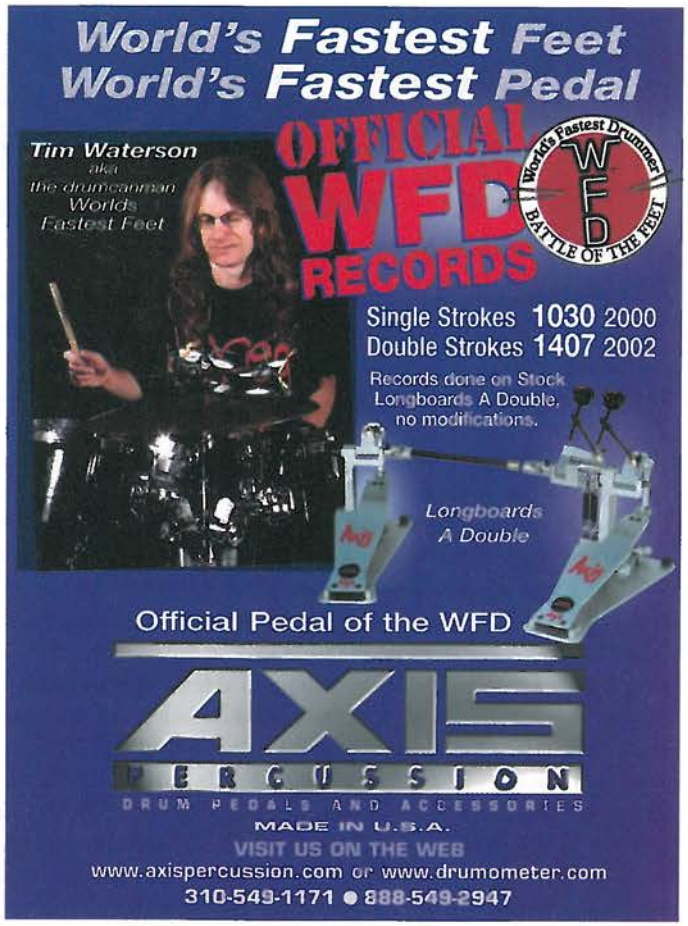


The final step is to orchestrate the patterns around the drums. Begin by moving your right hand over to the ride cymbal (assuming you're right-handed), while your left hand remains on the snare drum.

In the next example, Ostinato A is combined with Exercise 1.

1A

To accomplish a great-sounding groove, play the ghost notes near the edge of the snare drum, and try using light sticks. Also, be sure to relax and listen to the overall feel. In just a few minutes, these simple ideas will have you playing Latin drumset grooves you never thought you could play. Enjoy!

Maria Martinez's career includes work with such artists as Barry White, Angela Bofill, El Chicano, and Rita Coolidge, among others. She is also the author of several books and videos, all published by Hal Leonard (www.halleonard.com).



MAKING BEATS

A GUIDE TO BEAT MANIPULATION SOFTWARE

by Stuart McConaghy

The drum machine revolution didn't quite happen as predicted. In the early '80s many were forecasting the impending obsolescence of the drummer, thanks to the ease-of-use of the now legendary Linn drum machine. Well, it's safe to say that that obsolescence never happened. Being more open to change than assumed, drummers adapted quickly and learned how to program those mysterious little black boxes.

Now fast forward to the early 21st century. The beat is still the dominant part of the song, and it's often the part of the production that receives the most attention. Today's beat creation tools are elaborate and powerful, yet very easy to use. And most of all, they're *affordable*. With PCs and Macs becoming more versatile by the day, it only makes sense to harness the power of a computer to create some music.

In this article, we're going to take a look at the different types of beat manipulation programs that can add a few extra weapons to your drumming arsenal. Most of these products will function on their own, but they're often used as plug-ins within a hard disk recording program such as Digidesign's Pro Tools, MOTU's Digital Performer, and Steinberg's Cubase. So make sure you purchase the version with the plug-in format that corresponds to your recording software. You can find both PC- and Mac-compatible demo versions of many of these programs on their respective Web sites.

Loop Editing And Beat-Slicing Programs

PROPELLERHEADS RECYCLE
www.propellerheads.se
PC and MAC versions: $249
System requirements: OS X 10.2.8, G3, 128 MB RAM
Windows XP, Pentium 300 MHz or faster, 128 MB RAM

Propellerheads' ReCycle is probably the most popular beat manipulation tool on the market. In fact, it was one of the first. Propellerheads created a file format (REX) that divides a regular audio file into "slices," or segments. These slices are then assigned to MIDI data, which allows the user to make changes to the tempo of the loop without affecting the pitch. These sliced-up beats can also be rearranged to create new patterns that maintain the basic feel and sound of the original loop. These new loops can then be transferred to a sampler or loaded into a hard disk recording program.

ReCycle is also used to extract individual samples from loops, such as a single bass drum note or a snare hit. The extracted samples can be used in drum programming software to create original beats. ReCycle is easy to use and it's a great companion to Propellerheads' virtual studio Reason, which features a REX-loop player.

Brian Reitzell, drummer and producer with French pop act Air, used ReCycle during the production of *10.000mHz Legend*.

NATIVE INSTRUMENTS INTAKT AND KONTAKT
Www.native-instruments.com
PC and Mac versions:
Intakt $229, Kontakt $579
System requirements:
OS X 10.2.6, G3 500 MHz, 256 RAM
Windows XP, Pentium III /Athlon 400 MHz, 256 RAM

Native Instruments' Intakt functions in a similar fashion as ReCycle. It even imports ReCycle files. Intakt also supports key mapping, which allows a sample or loop to be assigned to a note value on a MIDI keyboard or an electronic drum pad.

Kontakt is like Intakt's big brother. It has the same basic functions, but its sampling capabilities are much more powerful. In fact, Kontakt can be used as many Intakt modules in one. Picture an Intakt file with samples and loops mapped to individual keys and pads. Now picture that times sixteen (for each MIDI channel). That's Kontakt.

Sample- And Loop-Based Programs

The following programs use loops as the basis for their sound engines. Many of them are based on performances by real drummers, which can be altered to suit your needs.

SPECTRASONICS STYLUS RMX
Www.spectrasonics.net
PC and Mac versions: $299
S.A.G.E. Expanders: $99 each
System requirements:
OS X 10.2.6 or higher,
1 GHz G4 or better,
1 GB RAM, 8 GB HD space
Windows 2000/XP,
1 GHz Pentium IV or better,
1 GB RAM, 8 GB HD space

Stylus is based on a combination of real drum performances and beat-slicing technology. Also included in the program are a virtual effects rack and the Chaos Engine—an effect that can slice up and randomly repeat, reverse, drop out, or slow down parts of a groove. If you've heard Aphex Twin or Squarepusher, you've heard Stylus.

The company's S.A.G.E. (Spectrasonics Advanced Groove Engine) technology features a lot of sound editing capabilities. Stylus also

comes with a 7.4 GB sound bank that's expandable by the company's S.A.G.E. Expanders, which are DVD libraries containing performances by famed drummer Gregg Bissonette and others. Unfortunately, all these nice features come at a price: It needs a powerful computer with *a lot* of RAM.

STEINBERG GROOVE AGENT 2

Www.steinberg.net
PC and Mac versions: $199
System requirements: OS X 10.2.5, G4 867 MHz, 384 MB RAM, 450 MB HD Space
Windows XP, Pentium/Athlon 800 MHz, 384 MB RAM, 450 MB HD Space

Groove Agent has become quite popular in the last two years. With this software, you can edit a collection of studio performances based on style, speed, tightness of groove, and complexity of pattern. It's based on the same technology as Wizoo's Darbuka and Latigo. In fact, Wizoo developed it.

WIZOO DARBUKA AND LATIGO

Www.m-audio.com
PC and Mac versions: $299
System requirements: OS X 10.3, G3 500 MHz, 256 MB RAM, 1 GB HD space
Windows XP, Pentium II /AMD7 500 MHz, 256 MB RAM, 1 GB HD space

Wizoo were the pioneers of the sample- and loop-based program. In addition to developing Steinberg's Groove Agent, they also created the popular Virtual Guitarist program, which emulates acoustic, electric, and bass guitar performances in many different styles.

For Darbuka and Latigo, Wizoo uses performances by world percussionists like Clay Ostwald and Mohammed Zaki that can be altered based on the complexity of the rhythms and the tightness of the groove. All of the sounds can be triggered as individual samples, which allows you to program your own patterns. As an added bonus, the manuals contain a lot of background information on the rhythms and instruments that are used.

Drum Sequencers

NATIVE INSTRUMENTS BATTERY 2

Www.native-instruments.com
PC and Mac versions: $229
System requirements: OS X 10.2.6, G3 500, 256 MB RAM, DVD drive
Windows XP, Pentium III /Athlon 500 GHz, 256 MB RAM, DVD drive

Native Instruments' Battery 2 is a great example of a modern software-based drum machine. It's intended to be used as a plug-in inside a hard disk recording application, but it can also be used as a sound module for electronic drummers. The retail version includes close to 3.5 GB of sounds, which is more than enough to get you going.

Battery is a powerful program that can be used to put together very dynamic and elaborate drumsets. Each sound is housed in one of seventy-two "cells." Each cell can contain up to 128 sounds mapped at different velocity levels—from pianissimo to Morgan Rose. Battery also features a plethora of sound-editing capabilities. On the downside, Battery's interface isn't very intuitive, which can be confusing for first-time users. But the clear and concise manual should clear up any questions.

Famous Battery users include *Modern Drummer* columnist Chris Vrenna (tweaker/Nine Inch Nails), and drum 'n' bass production team Dom and Roland.

GLARESOFT IDRUM

Www.m-audio.com
Mac only: $69.95
System requirements: OS X 10.2 or higher

IDrum is a simple drum computer designed to mimic the feel and ease-of-use of the drum computers of the past. It uses a grid-style interface, which should be familiar to anyone who has played with a Boss drum machine. In addition to a large sound library of 200 preset drumkits, any AIFF or WAV sound file can be imported.

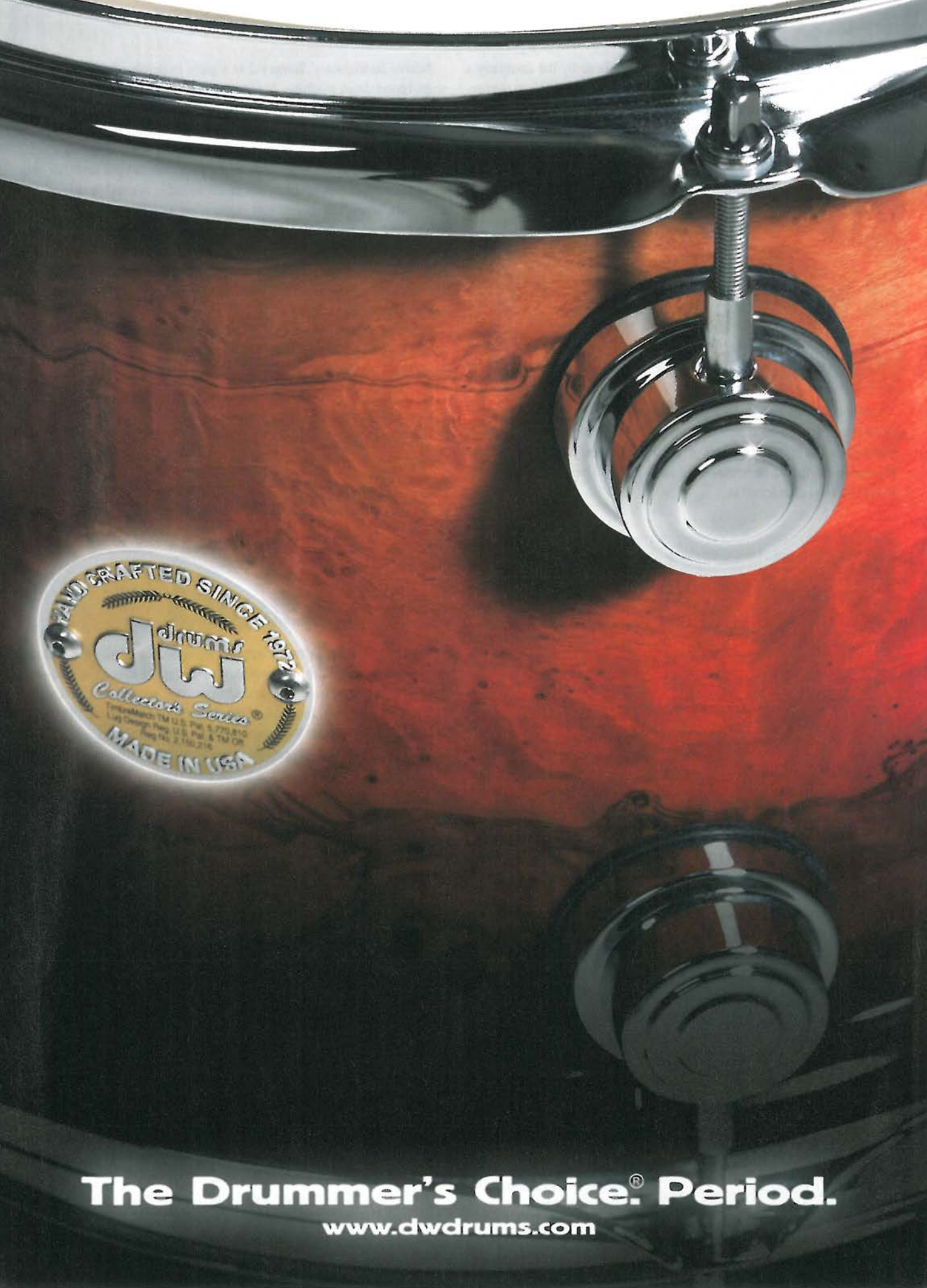
IDrum is very easy to program and sounds like the big boys. And thanks to its low price, it's a great first drum sequencer for those starting to make music on their computer. Too bad it's Mac-only.

TOONTRACK DRUMKIT FROM HELL

Www.toontrack.com
PC and Mac versions: prices vary

Drumkit From Hell has received a lot of praise—and rightfully so. It's one of the most carefully produced virtual drumkits on the market. It functions solely as a plug-in, but each package contains a lot of drummer-oriented tweaking possibilities (strainer on/off, beater type and material, microphone positioning, and leakage control) that help give a more realistic sound to programmed beats.

DFH's sound banks are huge—some reaching up to 40 GB in



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size—but the sound quality is excellent. In some versions, vintage drum and cymbal samples from Chris Whitten's (Paul McCartney, Dire Straits, Edie Brickell) private collection are included. And because of its simple mapping features, many drummers are using DFH with their electronic drum systems.

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Www.propellerheads.se
PC and MAC versions: $449
System requirements:
OS X 10.2, G3 or faster, 256 MB RAM, 2 GB HD space
Windows 2000/XP, Pentium III 300 MHz or faster, 256 MB RAM, 2 GB HD space

Reason was one of the first all-in-one software packages to hit the market and has become as revered as a vintage K cymbal. It contains a full-featured virtual rack of instruments and a powerful sequencer, which creates an intuitive songwriting environment. Reason also features two different synths (both of which can be used to generate analog drum sounds), a drum computer, a REX-loop player, two samplers, high-quality effects, *and* a large sound bank. One special feature of Reason's layout is that every module is represented as a piece of virtual "hardware" inside a rack, which can be flipped around to re-cable the individual units.

Reason is very easy to use, which is encouraging during the writing and production process. Plus, there's a huge online user base to exchange sounds and presets. Propellerheads have an online forum on their site, and Reasonstation (www.reasonstation.com) features a lot of free sounds and tutorials.

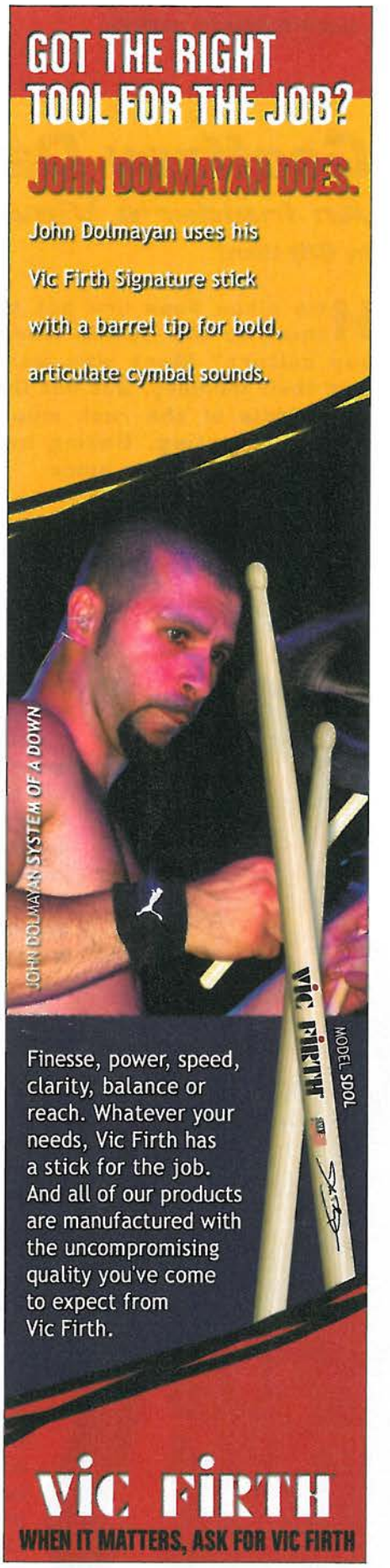
The Prodigy's Liam Howlett used Reason to create his band's latest album, *Always Outnumbered, Never Outgunned.*

ABLETON LIVE 4
Www.ableton.com
PC and MAC versions: $499
System requirements:
OS 9.2/OS X 10.1.5,
G3 or faster, 256 MB RAM
Windows 98/2000/XP, 600 MHz CPU, 256 MB RAM

Ableton Live combines many of the characteristics of the programs mentioned in this article. However, there are two features that make Live unique. First, the audio files do not require preparation for pitch or tempo changes. You simply drag the files into the interface, and—*voila*—they're ready for use.

The second special feature is Ableton's approach to beat-slicing. In Live, the original files are not affected. Instead, the program works with "analysis files" that store information about the loop's start and end points, the original tempo, and other parameters. So, unlike other beat-slicing tools, you don't have to make security copies of the original files. Live arms you with up to eight copies of each file, so you can isolate individual sounds within the loop and drag them into Live's Impulse drum module. From there, the sounds can be triggered by any MIDI sequence. Live also doubles as an easy-to-use hard disk recorder.

Live was featured at the 2003 Modern Drummer Festival Weekend during *Saturday Night Live* drummer Shawn Pelton's performance.



Geoffrey Daking

An Insider's View

by Billy Ward

How often does one get to meet somebody who was there in the 1960s when rock music exploded into pop culture? Most who were are either dead or have lost their memory. But not Geoff Daking. He was right in the middle of the rock music scene of the '60s. Even more interesting, Daking has sustained an impressive career in music ever since.

What makes Daking particularly unique is he's seen several sides of the music industry. He was a successful drummer, playing in the '60s with The Blues Magoos. (You may be familiar with their hit, "[We Ain't Got] Nothing Yet.") While with that group, Daking appeared on several tours with other successful or just-breaking bands, including The Who.

In the 1970s, Daking moved to the other side of the glass, working as an in-demand engineer in New York City for more than a decade. He recorded some of the greatest drummers of that era, including Steve Gadd, Bernard Purdie, and many others.

Eventually Daking became a hugely successful manufacturer of mic' pre-amps, limiters, and consoles. His company, Geoffrey Daking & Co. (see www.daking.com), manufacturers some of the finest studio products in the industry. I purchased some Daking mic' pre's in 1994 for my just-beginning studio, and soon realized why they're so popular among engineers looking for that great Neve-like sound. (We're talking a classic sound in a brand-new product that's built like a tank.)

Geoff has a sharp directness that's refreshing, especially in this day of "politically correct" discussions. And his views on the early days of rock 'n' roll offer a perspective that most of us never experienced. As an extra bonus, I also got to pick his brains about how to improve a home studio within certain budget guidelines.

Billy: When did you start playing with The Blues Magoos?

Geoff: I joined the band in January of 1966 and stayed with them until June of '69. We were signed to Mercury right after my arrival, so we started recording right away. We were playing at The Night Owl, a New York club where The Lovin' Spoonful, Tim Hardin, and Richie Havens performed. Jimi Hendrix was playing down the street. The Fuggs, The Blues Project, The Mothers Of Invention, and The Electric Flag were all playing within three blocks of each other. Nineteen-sixty-six was an amazing time to be in New York.

Billy: When did you start playing the drums?

Geoff: When I was thirteen.

Billy: Who were your influences? Ringo?

Geoff: Well, Ringo, of course. But until The Beatles came out, I had no interest in rock. I was into jazz. I would go see Joe Morello in clinic, or go to summer jazz clinics with some of the guys who started Berklee: Herb Pomeroy, Ray Santini, and Jimmy Mosier. Those guys would host clinics, and, as I recall, the treat at that time was to see The Maynard Ferguson Band. We would hear Maynard's band, and then the bandmembers would stay and teach us. I also went to the New York clubs all the time. I saw Elvin Jones, Coltrane, and Cannonball Adderley. Rufus "Speedy" Jones was a great drummer I saw a lot around that time. I heard he died in Vegas working as a janitor. Lost his mind. Pretty sad.

Before The Beatles, rock 'n' roll was pretty sappy—Bobby Vinton and stuff like that. I didn't understand The Beach Boys yet. But when The Beatles came, it all changed.

Billy: What drums did you play?

Geoff: Originally, I played Slingerland—bought 'em at a pawnshop. When I moved to New York, I bought Ludwigs.

Billy: Did you buy the Ludwigs because that's what Ringo and Joe Morello played?

Geoff: I bought Ludwigs because we went to Manny's and that's what they sold. This was in '63. That's what you got in '63 at Manny's. In '67, I played Slingerland because they gave me

Daking on stage with The Blues Magoos circa 1966

"I talked to Buddy Rich about John Bonham. Buddy sat at the drums, did a perfect imitation of Bonham, and said, 'Anybody can do that.'"

a set for a tour we did with The Who.

Billy: You opened for The Who?

Geoff: No, they opened for us! They were the unknown band. But after a few shows we decided to go on first because we didn't want to follow them. We didn't want to follow their pyrotechnics. Actually, the headliner on that tour was Herman's Hermits.

Billy: Oh my God!

Geoff: So the tour was supposed to be The Who, then The Blues Magoos, and then Herman's Hermits. We played with The Who before. Murray "The K" [famous deejay] used to have these shows where, for six bucks, you got all these live performances and a movie. We played a Murray "The K" show that had Cream, The Who, Mitch Ryder & The Detroit Wheels, Simon & Garfunkel, and Wilson Pickett. The drummer for Wilson Pickett was Buddy Miles.

Billy: Whoa! What other great drummers did you hear on those shows?

Geoff: Keith Moon. You know who else was a great drummer? The guy from The Turtles, John Barbata. He was in a terrible car accident later.

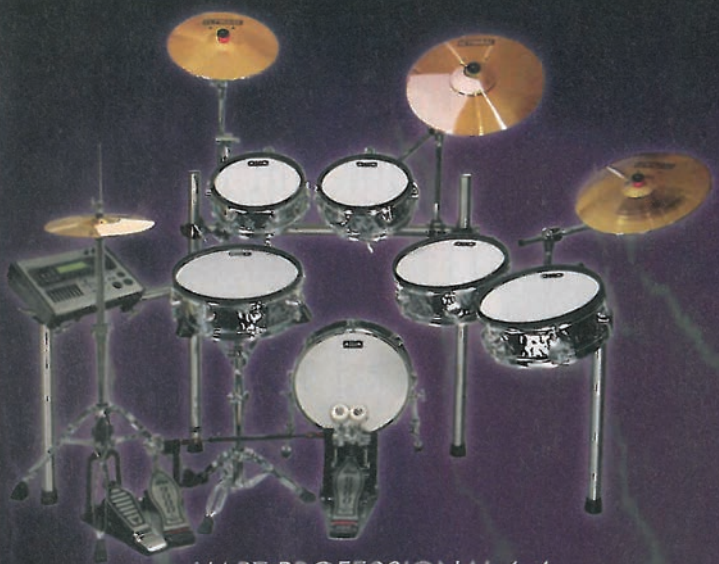
Billy: Your cymbals?

Geoff: I played Zildjian cymbals, but that changed when The Blues Magoos went to Chicago to play a show with The Association and The Lovin' Spoonful. We were there for a few days, so just for the heck of it I called up the Ludwig drum company and asked if they ever gave factory tours. They said, What do you mean? Nobody's ever asked us! So I went there and met Bill Ludwig Sr.—the old man was still alive. Do you remember the world-famous rudimental drummer Frank Arsenault? He was there stuffing envelopes in the back.

While I was at Ludwig, the brass asked me, What do you think of our stuff? I said, I like the drums, but I don't really like the hardware. The hi-hat pedals are kind of weak. They then showed me a new line of cymbals they were importing called Paiste. They gave me all these pedals and Paiste cymbals, and even made a special drumhead for me. They were really nice guys.

Billy: What would your ideal drumset sizes be?

Geoff: You mean to play or to carry? [laughs] The 14x24 bass drum is what I



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liked onstage because it was loud. I also preferred 9x13 and 16x16 toms, and a $6^{1}/_{2}$x14 brass snare drum. I also love bigger hi-hats, because they're easier to reach and have more volume. I used to play 16" hi-hats. I don't know why they aren't common today. And I'd only use two cymbals, a 20" and a 22".

Billy: Would you say that drummers today hit harder than they did in the '60s?

Geoff: Well, first of all, when we were playing 14,000-seat auditoriums, there were no mic's, so we played *very* hard.

Billy: I remember seeing Keith Moon with The Who and he wasn't miked.

Geoff: The thing that I don't quite get about some of the guys playing on today's stages is that they don't play dynamically—and they have monitors. Also, drummers are sounding very similar to each other. What is it that Les Paul says? "Play uniquely so that when you're on the radio your mother will recognize you." Don't sound like everybody else. Have a unique style.

Billy: That's interesting. In the art world, for instance with painters, they don't care about technique whatsoever. They don't care if a painting took five seconds to make or fifty years. It's the *idea* that matters. Technique seems to be more important in some corners of the music world.

Geoff: Would you quantize Keith Moon or Mitch Mitchell?

Billy: What got you out of drumming and into the studio as an engineer?

Geoff: The drugs around me! I was living in California, hanging out with Graham Parsons, Duane Allman, and Sal Mineo...all dead now. It simply occurred to me that if I kept hanging out with these guys I wasn't going to live very long. So I packed up and moved back to Woodstock, where I played in a band with Freddie Beckmire, Buzzy Feiten, and Dave Sanborn. We were a back-up band for this girl named Martha Velez, who was on Sire. We jammed a lot. I also started working on building a recording studio in Woodstock. Drummers can solder, you know.

I met the guys with API [studio console manufacturer], who had just built their second console. Later that year, I went to look at the console, which was at a studio called Sound Ideas. Well, the owner of the studio was going crazy, because they had too many clients. He asked me if I wanted to work there. That's how my engineering career got started.

Billy: What drummers do you remember working with as an engineer?

Geoff: There were many great players. Gadd was good. I also worked with John Bonham.

Billy: What did you do with Bonham?

Geoff: It was something with Felix Cavaliere [The Rascals], who was producing this girl, Maggie Bell, who was on the same label as Zeppelin, Swan Song.

Billy: Was Bonham playing his big drums?

Geoff: He just played the studio kit that was in the booth. He plugged in and played it like any session drummer would. It's funny, but it still sounded like him.

Bernard Purdie was another drummer I recorded. The first time I met him was in '66 at Regent Sound. Purdie's a character! Great guy. Tom Dowd used to always hire Barry Lazarawitz to play percussion, in case Purdie didn't show up. Those were the days when you had to follow some of the session players home to make sure they got home safe. Other drummers I worked with included Alan Schwartzberg, Andy Newmark, and Rick Marotta. They were all great. Stevie Wonder, too! That kid was brilliant—incredible dynamics on the drums. Dave Grohl from The Foo Fighters is a great current guy. Steve Ferrone is great: nice guy, easy to work with. I've recorded him many times. I also recorded Art Blakey and Mel Lewis. Those guys could groove!

I just like guys who groove—Jabo Starks, Clyde Stubblefield, Al Jackson, Jim Keltner.... One of my favorite records is Ry Cooder's *Into The Purple Valley*, with Keltner on drums. It's ridiculous—loose and funky. Wells Kelly was great too.

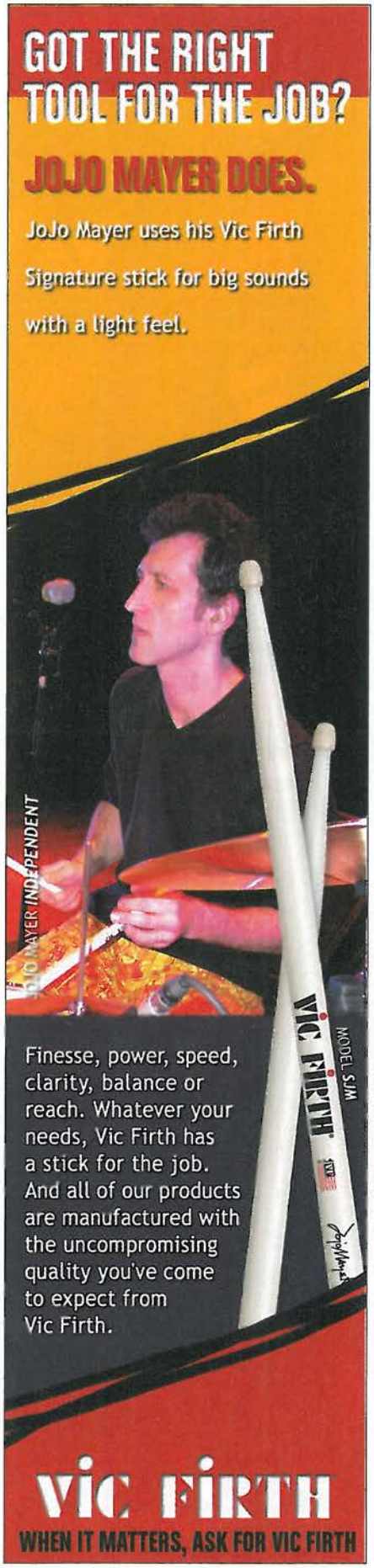
Billy: I don't know who Wells Kelly is.

Geoff: He was in the band Orleans. He was a great drummer—another kid who drowned in his own vomit.

I remember being in the studio once with Buddy Rich. He didn't like rock drummers. He liked Steve Gadd, though. I talked to Buddy about John Bonham. He then sat down at the drums and did a perfect imitation of Bonham. Buddy said, "Anybody can do that."

Billy: I've had arguments with some jazz players who think that simply playing fewer notes qualifies them for The Rolling Stones.

Geoff: Can you imagine Steve Gadd trying to play like Charlie Watts?



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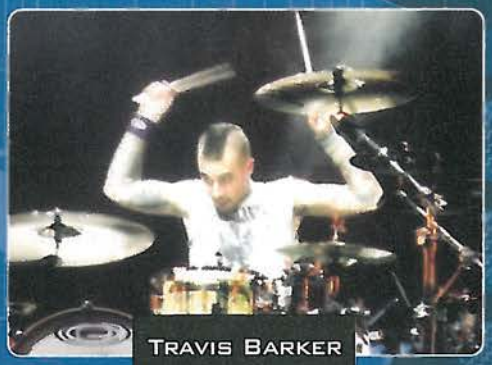
Jason Mraz

Santa Clara Vanguard
Drum Corps

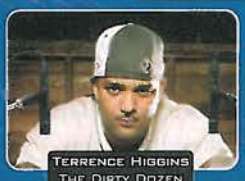

Travis Barker

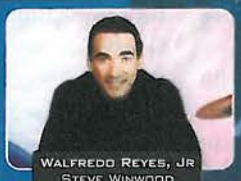
Airto Moreira

Stephen Perkins
Banyan

Rikki Rockett
Poison

Luis Conte


Terrence Higgins
The Dirty Dozen


Walfredo Reyes, Jr
Steve Winwood

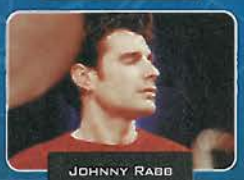
Stanton Moore
Galactic

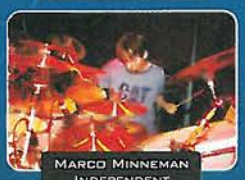
Mercedes Lander
Kittie

Zoro
Lenny Kravitz

Lester Estelle
Pillar

Richie "Gajate" Garcia


Johnny Rabb


Marco Minneman
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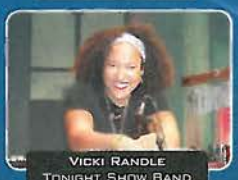
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Geoffrey Daking

Billy: What was fun about recording all of those jingles in the '80s?

Geoff: Let's put it this way, you walk into a studio at 9:00 A.M. for a 10:00 session. At 10:00 you're surrounded by the best musicians in the world. You've got Steve Gadd, Will Lee, John Tropea, and Dave Sanborn. By 11:00 A.M., you've got six minutes of music. Some of those guys didn't even walk in until 10:05. It was fantastic.

The thing I hated—and it's what finished me off as an engineer—was MIDI. Those keyboard players hitting a button and hearing "eee." Then another button..."eee." They'd say, "There's a string sound in here somewhere." I'd take a lunch break, come back, and they were still going "eee." That ended it for me.

Billy: Do you still play the drums?

Geoff: Yeah. I play in some hideous bar bands with guys who are lawyers, ad guys, Fed Ex pilots.... It still feels great to play.

Billy: Today, when you walk into a music store, the so-called pro-audio area takes up more space than the drums. People are making records in their bedrooms. I'm wondering if you could recommend some possible purchases for a musician on a budget. Let's say you've got $2,000—which will only buy one Geoffrey Daking mic' preamp. What would you recommend we buy?

Geoff: You're better off with one good mic' rather than six crummy ones. You can record a set of drums with two mic's.

Billy: So if you have two mic's, you'd put one on the bass drum and one over the kit?

Geoff: That's where it starts. If I have three, I put the third on the snare drum.

Billy: And you'd stay mono?

Geoff: You can spread 'em out. I don't ever pan the drums in the middle anyway.

Billy: Really?

Geoff: Really. Eventually, you can add another overhead and that would be enough. What are you gonna mike, the hi-hat? It's the only instrument not worth recording. [laughs]

Billy: Yeah, the hats can be a problem, bleeding into other mic's. But some people mike the hi-hat.

Geoff: Well, some people mike the bottom of the snare drum too.

Billy: So I gather that you're a minimalist. You believe less is more.

Geoff: Well, especially if you don't have any money...you'd better be a minimalist!

Billy: Let's say you've got some of those Chinese-made condenser mic's that are cheap, a Mackie board, and some kind of hard-disk recorder. What would you spend another $2,000 on?

Geoff: I'd get the Shure SM7, or I'd buy a large-diaphragm mic' for the bass drum. I would buy that used. Let's see, they sell new for $350, so I'd buy one used for $200. Then I'd get some kind of condenser microphone.

Billy: Well, you've got two Chinese condensers....

Geoff: Throw those out. I would buy two Beyer M160s, which are ribbon microphones. You can use one for the overhead and the other for the snare. Those are very useful mic's for a lot of things. So what are we up to, $750? So we have $1,250 left.

Billy: Mic' pre's for $1,250? It's gonna be hard.

Geoff: Yeah, I guess you have to buy some used mic' pre's.

Billy: I've always believed that the mic' pre is more important than the mic'. I think I'd rather have a Shure 57 with a great pre instead of a great mic' with a lousy pre.

Geoff: That's probably true. The problem with mic' pre's is, if you want them to sound great, you need transformers. And transformers are expensive. All the great-sounding gear that most people like to record on—Neve, API, Trident—have transformers. Basically, think quality, not quantity.

Billy: What about these drum-mic' kits that are available today?

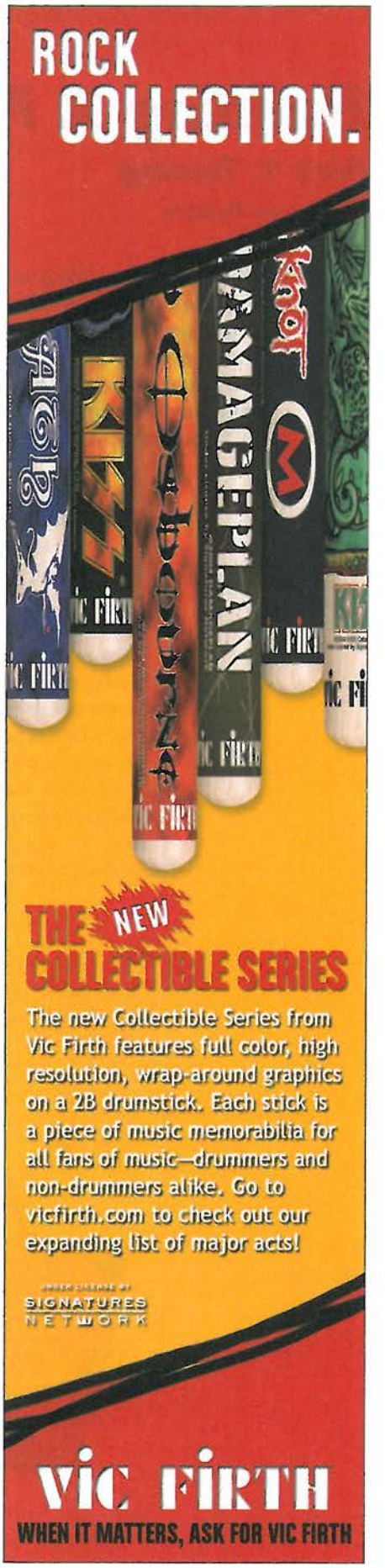
Geoff: You could get one of those cheap mic' kits and get my four-channel mic' pre, which now has a street price of $1,895. That might be the best option.

Billy: What about compression?

Geoff: I'm a big fan of compression. Not necessarily for level control, but for color.

Billy: Let's end with some talk about drum sound. What makes for a great drum sound? What's the recipe?

Geoff: It's the drummer. I mean, you never heard Bonham sound bad. Some drummers just make a drum sound great. Purdie would come in and sit down on a mediocre kit and make it sound great just by how he played. So all these guys with these fancy drums, I don't understand them. I don't honestly think the drums are that important—certainly not as important as the player.



Building A Fan Base

Part 1: Touring

by Darren Pujalet

For bands, building a fan base is essential. Most groups start small and grow over time; only a small percentage rocket to success right away. There are many elements involved in developing a fan base. Some simply require hard work and commitment, while others involve a lot of creativity, innovation, and forward thinking.

The three main categories to consider while trying to build a fan base are touring, promotion, and building a proper team. In this segment we're going to focus on touring.

Puttin' Yourself Out There

There is no better way to generate a following than by performing in front of an audience. Hitting the road and taking your music to the people will help expose potential fans to what you do. However, while being up close and personal with your fans is important, relentless touring can be counterproductive—unless you properly plan your strategy.

First, it's important to play a style of music that comes from your heart. If you're just playing what you think people will like, eventually you'll lose the passion and drive it takes to be drumming on the road day in and day out. And if your audience can sense a lack of enthusiasm on your part, they might not want to come back again. (Hint: Yawning all night on stage is bad.)

I've heard seasoned professionals say time and time again how important it is to be unique with what you do, even if you're a cover band. And it isn't always just about the music. Sometimes it's about the entire show. Often, people just want to be entertained and taken away from their daily responsibilities for a few hours. Find the best qualities and skills that your band has to offer, and build upon them.

Be A Band With A Plan

Before going out on the road, sit down with your bandmates and discuss what it is that you're really going after. Set some short- and long-term goals so you're actually working *towards* something. Make sure those goals are realistic and attainable, and know the limitations within them.

Some musicians just want to travel and feel that rock 'n' roll lifestyle. Others are looking to build a

While being up close and personal with your fans is important, relentless touring can be counterproductive—unless you properly plan your strategy.

long-lasting career. Many bands have done both simultaneously. It is possible, so by all means, have fun.

Ah, but how will you pay the bills while you're out of town, and where will the money come from? Are you and your bandmates willing to quit your day jobs to travel, and give up the perks of sleeping at home in your own bed? Are you okay giving up personal space and potential practice time? Do you have the commitment it takes to be out there over long periods of time, sitting behind your drumkit for hours every night? These are some of the questions you need to ask. Find out what level of commitment everyone has, because touring as a step toward gaining a fan base can take a lot of work.

You're Not Gonna Get Rich

It's difficult to make money by touring until you've established yourself—especially if you don't have a recording contract. Many bands—including my band, Particle—have taken a grassroots approach to building a fan base without a record deal, but it takes time and perseverance.

In the meantime, it's important to establish where the funds to finance a tour will come from. Ask yourself if it's economical to go out full-time or part-time, regional or national. For a drummer, the cost of sticks and drumheads can add up over a tour. For a band, the minimum costs involve gas, three meals a day, and one or more vehicles to get you to the gig, carry your gear, and sleep in if need be.

If you're smart, you can talk the guy at the taco stand into giving you a free burrito for putting him on the guest list. Sometimes the promoter will provide food and drinks backstage. In some cases this can actually be stipulated beforehand, in a part of your contract known as a rider. Particle eventually graduated from a few cans of Budweiser to bottles of Patron, Naked juice, bologna, and all the Balance bars we could eat. If you're lucky, you might have some cardboard pizzas waiting for you after the show. Every other luxury above that comes at extra cost to you, so work on a budget before you get out there.

Illustration by Joseph King

Know Your Audience

It's also important to know your target audience: their age, their interests, whether they are conservative or liberal, and so forth. Finding and cultivating your core fan base is critical to growing faster than the average band. They are the fans that will come back to your shows and bring friends. Those friends will bring friends to the *next* show, and the numbers will continue to grow. To help that process along, it's important to make tickets affordable so you don't prevent potential fans from coming to your show. We'll discuss that in greater detail in the next installment.

Keep The Home Fires Burning

Many bands overlook the value of creating a buzz in their home town before taking the show on the road. Fans can be generated at home without incurring the high costs of traveling from city to city. Local and regional gigs can be a great source of income for building your band's touring fund. Additionally, the Internet lets local fans stir up interest nationally by talking on message boards and in chat groups. You may show up in a new town and be surprised to find yourself playing to a warm crowd that has already heard about you.

It's A Digital World

Speaking of the Internet, that medium can be a major help in developing your fan base—especially when it comes to exposing your music to potential fans. By now, most of the homes in North America, Europe, and Asia have access to the Net. The Internet is crafting the future of the music business.

Encourage your existing fans to share

your music with others. This can pique their interest enough to pay the price of a concert ticket. Letting our audiences record during our shows has helped Particle build a base of fans worldwide. The first time we went to Japan and Europe, we played to sold-out audiences that were shouting out the names of our songs, all because of Internet chatter and on-line music trading.

Know Where You're Going

The way you route your shows is crucial to your success and longevity. It's important to know what types of venues you'll be playing in (rock clubs, private events, festivals, Joey's back-alley keg party) and what time of year you will tour. Suggestion: Don't tour Arizona in the summertime without AC in your vehicle.

While we're on the subject of heat, remember that playing drums in the heat can take the life out of you, while the guitar player finishes the show without even breaking a sweat. I almost collapsed from heat stroke at last year's Austin City Limits festival. Our set was mid-day in 100° weather with high humidity, and our music is high energy.

When you're considering where to play on your tour, ask yourself where your fan base is most likely to frequent. One way to increase their numbers is by playing in front of built-in audiences at festivals or street fairs, or by opening for a band that already has a large following. These events generally don't pay as well, but the exposure can be incredibly valuable. On the other hand, be aware of competition playing in the same geographic region as you. A huge band playing right down the street can hurt your attendance, and your pride.

Try not to cancel a show at the last minute, since this can turn a fan sour forever. One way to avoid this is not to book gigs too far away from each other. Give yourself ample time to get from one date to the next. Particle once did three full-length shows in twenty-four hours, flying into two different states. On another tour we played sixteen days in a row in ten different states. Drumming this often can be exhausting and damaging, so pace yourself.

Keep Things Fresh

At any one time of year there are thousands of bands touring throughout North America. To avoid getting lost in the shuffle, it's advantageous to give your fans something they can walk away talking about. Reinventing your show or tour by trying new ideas—or simply by delivering a strong performance—will help. This doesn't necessarily mean that you should attempt stick acrobatics all night, or that you should stage dive onto the bass player when he's not looking. Particle played a full set interpreting the music of Pink Floyd over New Year's 2003, and we did a show entirely based on TV's most popular theme songs—complete with props and costumes—for Halloween 2004.

Some fans come back to shows for the element of mystery and surprise, while others come because they know exactly what they are going to get. Although I don't suggest it, I did see a singer perform on stage in a chicken suit while the drummer was wearing a tutu. Have fun mixing it up, but be careful!

Maintain A Team Spirit

Last but not least, learn to work together and manage your time as a band. There is an old phrase that says "Drummers drive the bus." That applies to more than your onstage performance. Armed with the suggestions offered here, you can play an integral role in getting your band out there on the road.

Next time we'll talk about the importance of promotion in building a fan base. See you then.

Darren Pujalet is the rhythmic pulse behind the band Particle. The pioneering electronic/jam-rock instrumental quartet has played over five hundred shows around the world, including some of the nation's biggest festivals. Their 2004 debut CD, Launchpad, *was hailed by the Associated Press as one of that year's top ten recordings. More information is available at www.particlepeople.com.*

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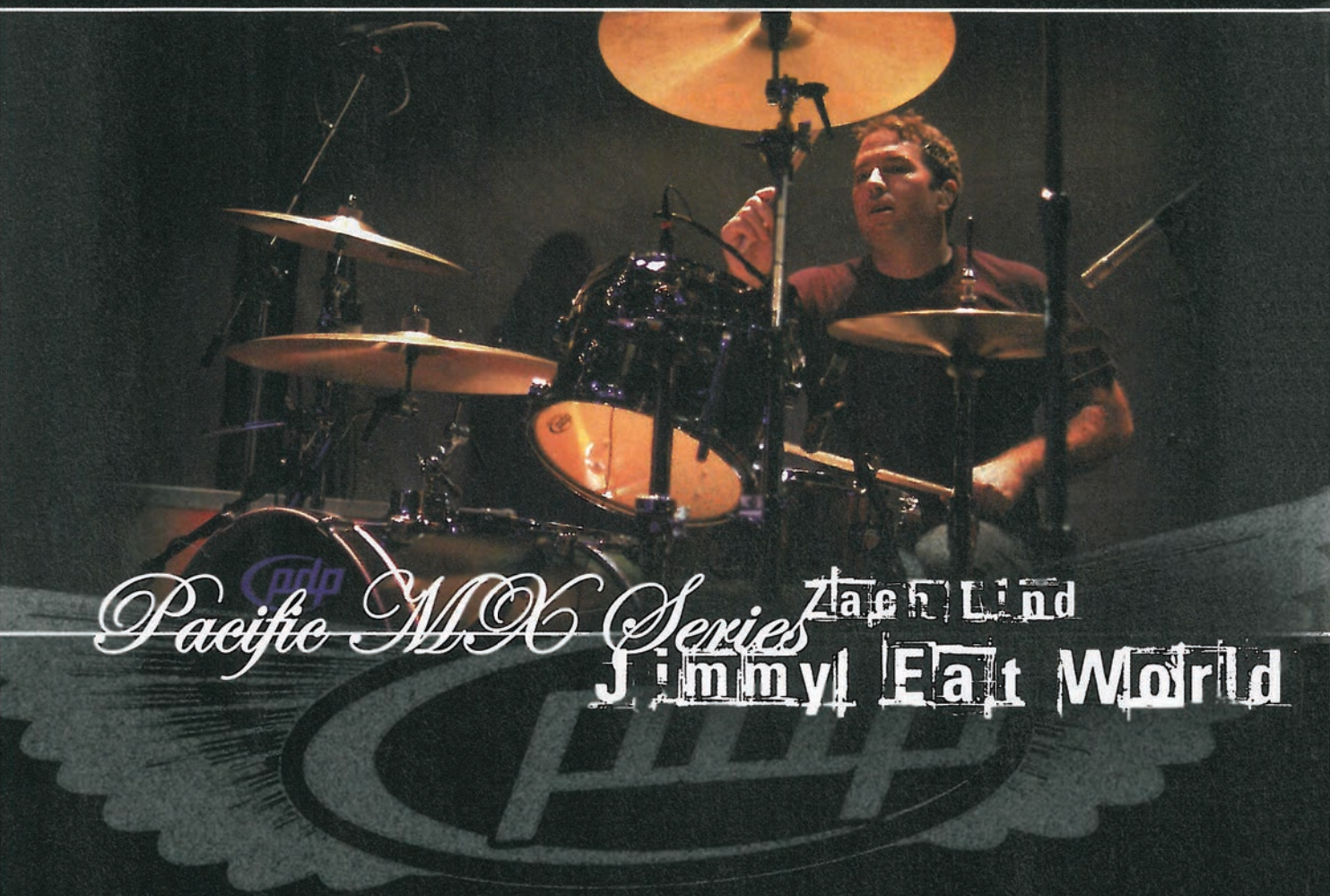

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Shakerleg

A Subway Drummer's Quest For Late Night Stardom

by Michael Dawson

"If Conan O'Brien needs someone to keep an audience's attention for four minutes, put me on!" exclaims Shakerleg, one of New York City's most dynamic subway musicians. "There's so much boring crap on TV, it's making me lose my mind. Maybe I should challenge Max Weinberg to a drum-off?"

It's just such uncompromising positions that fortify this explosive performer to venture into the underbelly of Manhattan each night, where he shocks unsuspecting commuters with his electrifying stick-less drumming performances. In fact, due to his relentless determination, Shakerleg's life as a subway musician has expanded from a once-in-a-while activity to a full-time career. He even went international in 2003, traveling to Seoul, Korea with other NYC subway artists to perform throughout the capital city. These trips led to a stream of interviews for several major Korean newspapers and television broadcasts.

In addition to his daily performances in the subway, and the occasional club date with fellow underground musicians Joe Murphy and Theo Eastwind, Shakerleg maintains a Web site (www.shakerleg.com) and sells a range of merchandise that includes a clothing line and a full-length CD titled *Handmade*, which was recorded live in the subway. Shakerleg is also completing a documentary film with director Rauzar Alexander that captures the peculiarities of his day-to-day

experiences as a subway performer.

Initially drawn to the Big Apple to pursue his interests as an actor, Shakerleg struggled to catch a break. He quickly learned that life as a fledgling actor isn't easy. He found himself resorting to various bizarre vocations to keep food on the table, including delivering singing telegrams and chauffeuring for an escort service. It wasn't until he caught a glimpse of the money-making possibilities of the subway that things turned around. "I didn't *want* to be a subway performer," Shakerleg explains. "But when I went down to the subway and saw the guys playing, it got me thinking, 'I wonder how much they're making?' That started the whole thing off."

Coming from a musical household, Shakerleg began playing drumset in junior high school. But he discovered the true power of music after attending a show by singer/songwriter Martin Sexton. "I've got to give all the credit to Martin," says Shakerleg. "He's the pinnacle of any musician I've ever seen. It was his energy on stage that showed me that you should just about kill yourself to give the audience the best show possible. Plus he started out playing in the subway, and it created his whole career."

Making His Debut

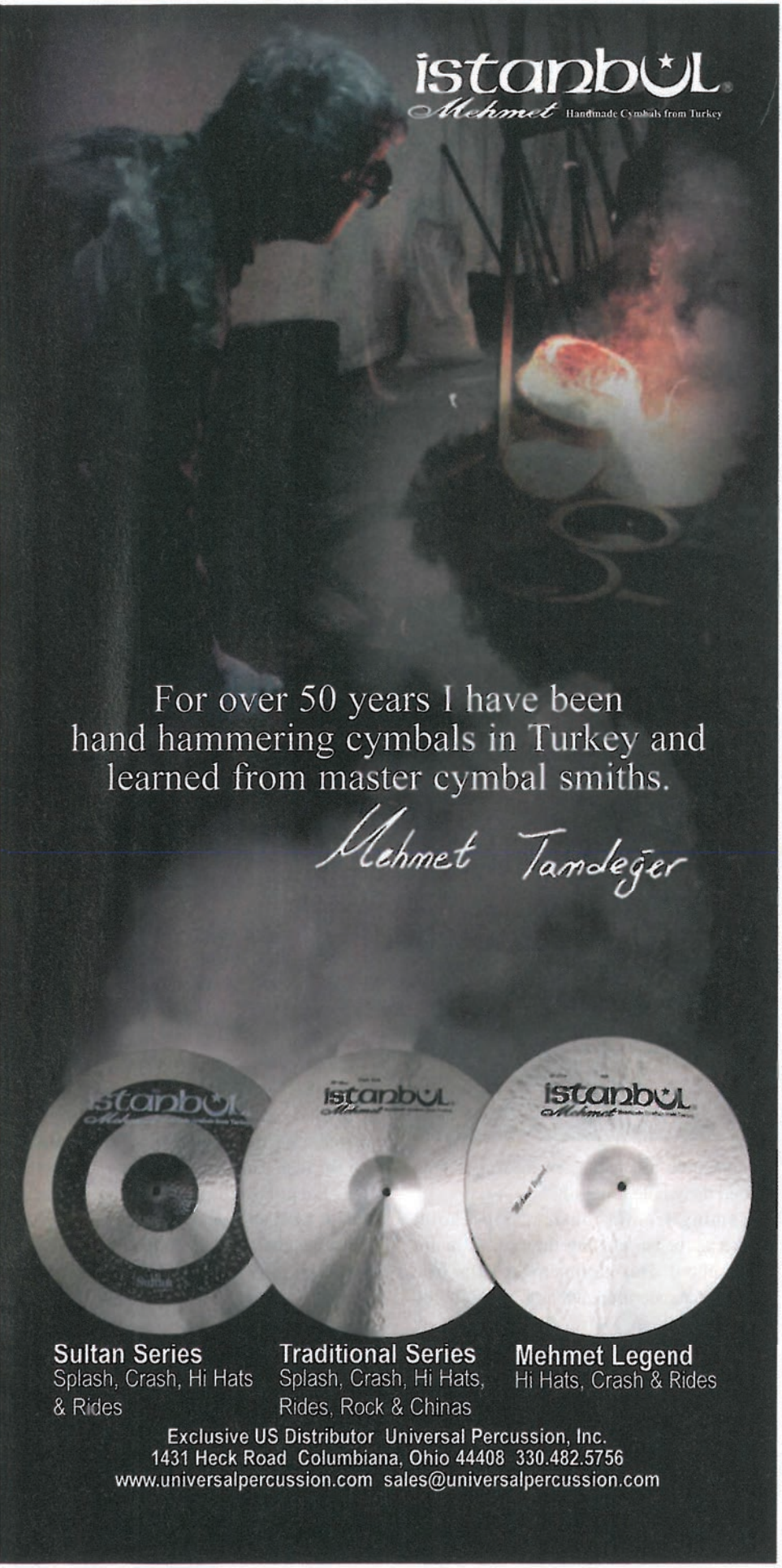
Armed with that inspiration, plus the memory of a drummer who played a djembe with a shaker attached to his leg, Shakerleg made his first appearance on the unforgiving stage of the New York City subways. Recalling those early experiences, he says, "When I started out, I had to play for seven hours. It was exhausting. But the more I stuck to it, the less time I had to be down there. But it really wasn't until I added the CD that everything changed. I was beating the hell out of my hands and leaving with maybe $60. Now that I've got the CD, it's a whole world of difference."

But it wasn't just the addition of merchandise that made an impact on Shakerleg's success. Since his humble beginnings, the bare-knuckled drummer has created a high-energy performance style full of deep djembe grooves, up and down cymbal strikes, cowbell and Jam Block melodies, and quick-fingered hi-hat chokes. Explaining the origin of his unusual technique, Shakerleg recalls, "I saw a guy on 59th Street who played a djembe with his hands while also hitting a ride cymbal and a cowbell with a stick. It was cool, but I saw him reaching for the stick and it messed with the flow. I wanted to use a cymbal too, but I didn't want to use a stick."

So Shakerleg started experimenting, eventually discovering a clever way to play the djembe and cymbal together without using sticks. "It's possible to hit the bass tone and cymbal together, but both hands are coming down. That didn't seem to be fast enough for me," explains the drummer. "So I tried hitting the cymbal on the way up. And after doing it in front of an audience for two years, I could do it a lot more often. Eventually, I started using my left hand, so I put up another cymbal."

As a result of this technical revelation, Shakerleg's performances evolved, becoming more dynamic and exciting with each passing week. Soon the growing musician started adding extra cymbals, bells, and other percussive sounds to his original setup of an 18" Remo djembe and homemade ankle shakers.

One piece of his expanded rig—a Sonor Jungle snare drum—is used in a particularly interesting way. Instead of striking the drum, Shakerleg incorporates the instru-



Shakerleg

ment's sympathetic snare buzz into his djembe sound. "In my setup, the snare only reacts when I get near it," he explains. "I can raise the back of my chair to get away from it, which gives me a nice open sound. Then when I come down near the snare, it's like a whole other world."

A Day In The Life

Shakerleg's typical day starts sometime after 9:00 P.M. by the L line at Union Square, or between the #1 and #9 trains at Times Square. After choosing his position and putting the finishing touches on his bizarre setup, Shakerleg strategically tapes up his fingers and does a few stretches to loosen up. He then straps the homemade shakers onto his left foot, puts out his CD display, and takes a seat. Then, with a quick shake of his head, he begins his show.

Rapping slowly and lightly on his deeply tuned djembe, Shakerleg calls out to those passing by. Some quickly gather around, while others slow their pace to catch a glimpse of the commotion. At this point, Shakerleg explodes into an infectious hip-hop-tinged groove that explores each component of his unusual kit, all the while stomping a bed of rhythm with his left foot. After a few dynamic shifts, the performance culminates with a flurry of upward cymbal strikes, piercing djembe slaps, and deep palm strokes that bring cheers and applause from the impromptu crowd.

Of course, not every day is quite so successful. In addition to some of the less-glorious aspects of being a subway performer—from run-ins with hecklers and beggars to the noxious subway fumes—Shakerleg is in a constant battle with the NYPD, who often shut down the drummer's performances due to "volume constraints."

Why does such an ambitious and exciting performer, whose sights are set on the stars, continue to employ the subway as his artistic platform? "There's just some rawness about the subway that I can't get anywhere else," Shakerleg explains. "I have to compete with the fact that people just don't care down there. If they don't like it, they just walk on by. And that hits me in a way that I don't think it would in a club. It slaps me in the face and says, 'You know what? You still have a lot to learn.'"

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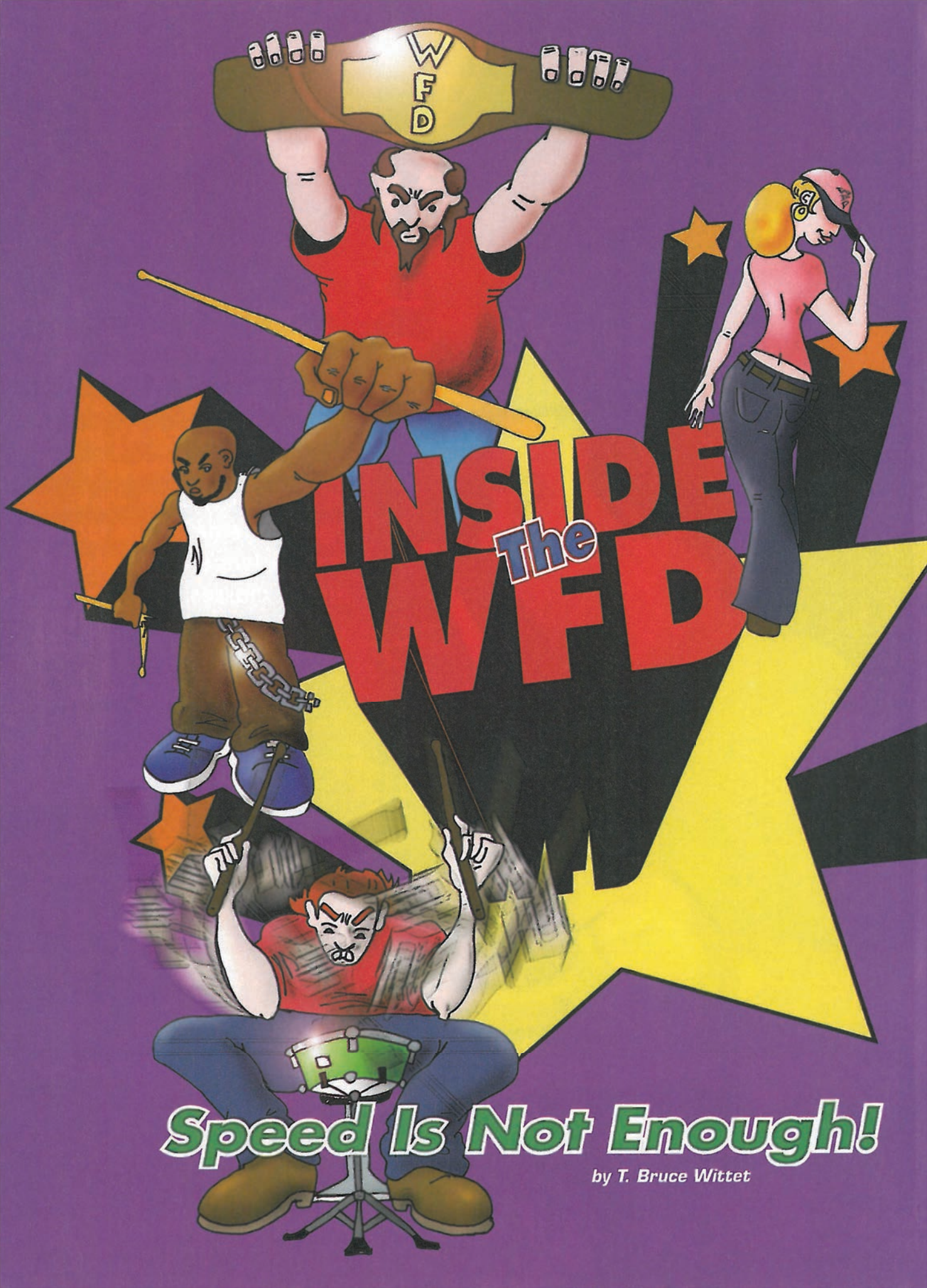
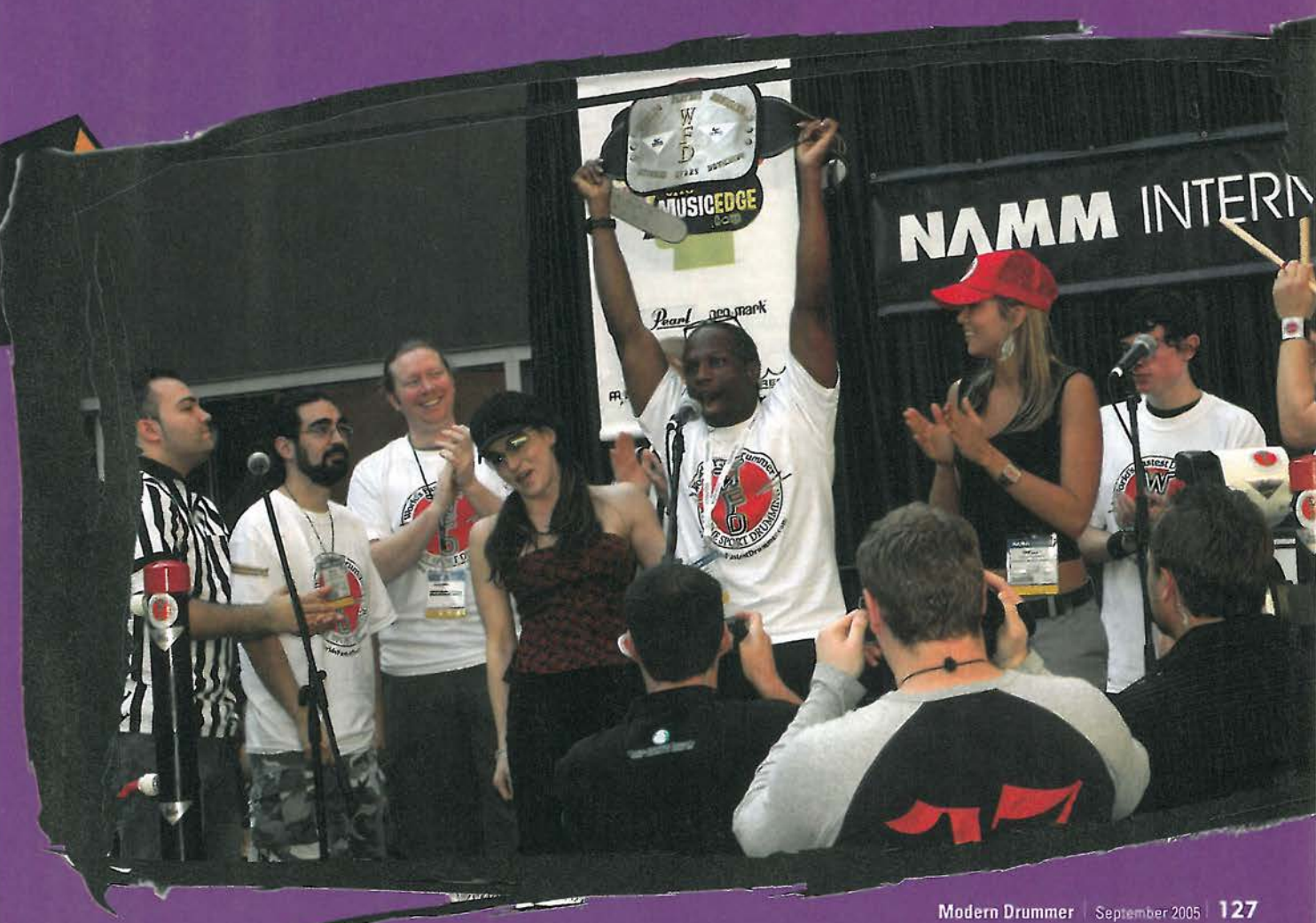

WFD
INSIDE
The
WFD
Speed Is Not Enough!
by T. Bruce Wittet

The late Ron Spagnardi, founder of *Modern Drummer*, wrote a provocative editorial in June 2001. Ron's words fanned a firestorm of controversy that spilled over from these pages onto the Internet. Leading off with the statement, "Can someone tell me just when the art of drumming became an athletic event?", Ron alluded loosely to the World's Fastest Drummer, an organization that had begun promoting competitions to determine fastest hands and fastest feet. "What next," Ron quipped, "an award for the guy who can set up and break down his gear the fastest?"

As a longtime *MD* writer, I sided with Ron, as did a lot of serious-minded drummers. I was skeptical about the WFD, a.k.a. Extreme Sports Drumming—skeptical about their obsession with speed, skeptical about their *WrestleMania* facade, and skeptical about their booth at the NAMM (National Association Of Music Merchants) show, the place where drummers propel their limbs feverishly in the hopes of winning valuable prizes and the right to wear a giant, WWE-style belt buckle. I was *above* such rude displays.

The controversy persisted, generating yards of mail and clogging the chat rooms. Meanwhile, the WFD persevered. It evolved and matured into an institution dedicated to safeguarding drumming standards and sharing the secrets of good technique. In fact, WFD founder Boo McAfee was so convinced of the merits of what he was doing that he closed down his beloved Nashville Percussion Institute. The WFD would be his "road version" of the NPI. To Boo, the speed thing was only one side of WFD: the fun factor. But the WFD had become much more than a gladiator thing.



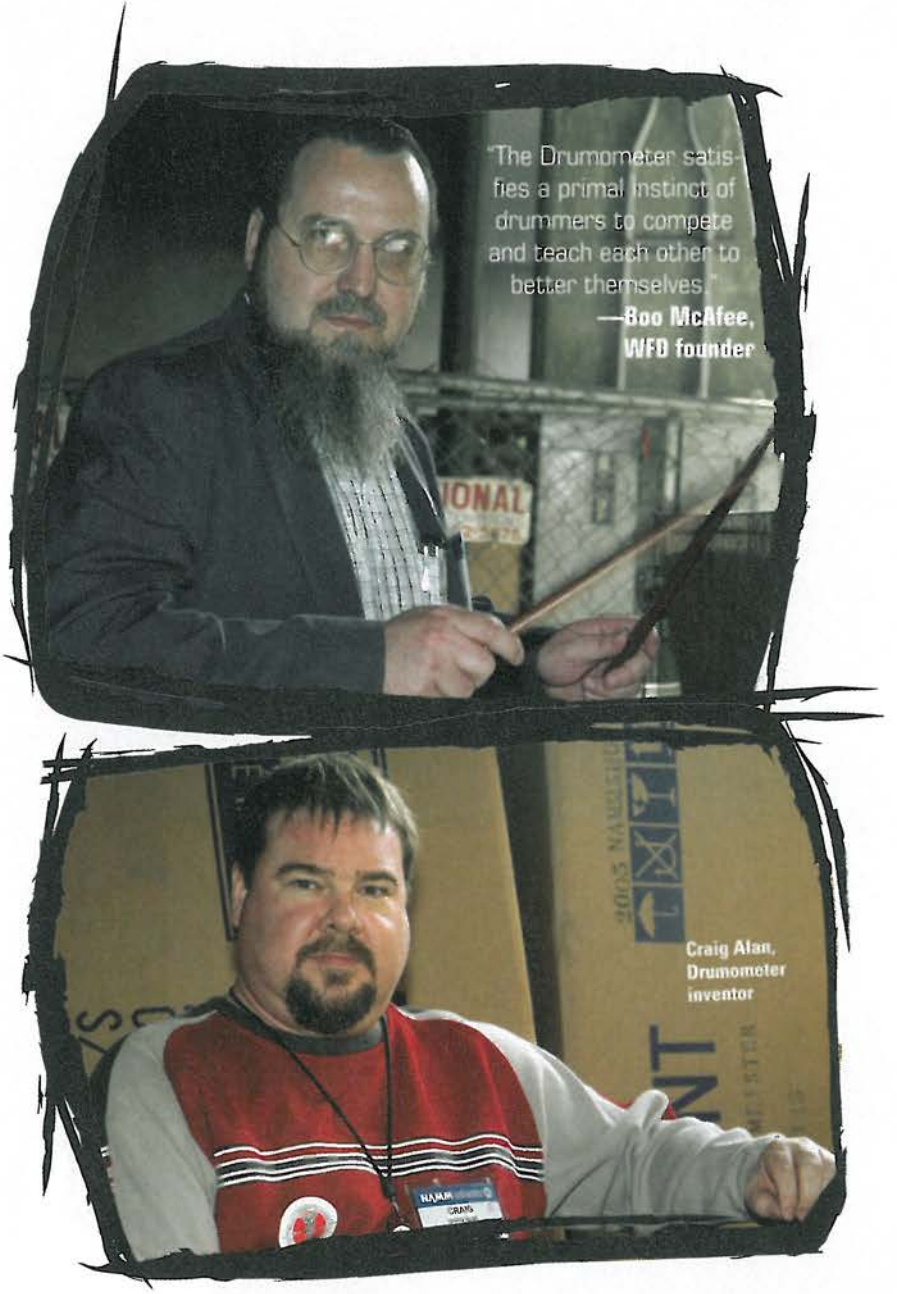
Still a little skeptical, earlier this year at NAMM I hung out at the speed drumming preliminaries and finals. As I conversed with Boo and inventor Craig Alan, who is responsible for the Drumometer, a device that clocks strokes on a pad or drum, I began to realize that speed is only the tip of the WFD iceberg. What lies below is a massive foundation of technique. The WFD, moreover, is a place where any aspiring player can go and get drumming tips from the likes of Mike Mangini, a longtime devotee.

Or approach another WFD stalwart, Art Verdi. Ask about his frightening single-stroke roll and he'll be all over you like a rash until you've grasped his logic. Case in point, I grabbed sticks and executed what I considered a respectable single-stroke roll. Art issued his verdict: "Okay, your grip is okay, but it's so loose that the fulcrum is moving around. You'll never attain really fast and consistent single strokes unless you keep your fingers firmly on the part of the stick that gives you optimum bounce."

To this day, I'm still savoring what Art, Boo, and Mike taught me in their gentle but persuasive manner. I've become less critical of the speed aspect of the WFD, because now I see where Boo is going with this. Granted, speed is what provides the excitement and fun—the reason many of us became attracted to drumming in the first place—but the real mission here is to improve your technique.

After spending a couple of afternoons with the WFD, I can report that they are genuinely nice guys who live and breathe drumming. There's no technical secret they won't share. Okay, so maybe they *won't* give you the shirt off their backs, but if you win the WFD fastest hands or fastest feet category, they *will* let you wear their mega-belt and big-ass buckle!

Let's meet Boo and Craig, the two principals of the WFD, then shake hands with a few of their colleagues.



Boo And Craig Down Memory Lane

"I attended the NAMM show in 1975," recalls Boo. "I was there to see Barrett Deems, who billed himself as the world's fastest drummer. Mr. Deems came out in his motorcycle jacket and said, 'Hello folks, I'm the world's fastest drummer.' I then heard this voice on my left, 'Oh yeah, what machine did you use?' And it was Buddy Rich! I thought, If we had a machine here right now, it wouldn't be subjective; it would be clear who was the world's fastest drummer. Over the next twenty-four years I met several engineers, but it wasn't until I met Craig Alan that the idea came to life."

Craig, a drummer and electrical engineer, teamed up with Boo in 1999, and within six months they had the first prototype Drumometer. Boo sees it as an event of two-fold significance: "It satisfies a primal instinct of drummers to compete and teach each other to better themselves."

The device in question consists of a module that reads out your speed in strokes per minute by means of a trigger, which may be attached to a pad or drum. The trigger has been tweaked to track only "authentic" strokes.

In fact, this was the hardest thing about building the Drumometer, says Craig. "A trigger pad will pick up a lot of garbage," he explains. "I had to identify what a true drum stroke is and then cut off the little buzzes, ripples, and false triggers. At first, we weren't sure how fast a drummer could play. Soon we found that in one minute it's possible to play roughly a thousand to fifteen hundred single strokes."

Boo sees the Drumometer as a tool for self-improvement. "Johnny Rabb will do twenty-two strokes a second," he explains. "He gets forty-four in two seconds. If he gets to eighty-eight and it's *not* in four seconds, he knows he's got some work to do in the area of consistency."

And here he makes an important distinction. "We've been talking about the

Drumometer aspect. The WFD is the 'extreme sport' aspect. [www.extremesport-drumming.com] When we hold our events, the educational tool and the fun side come together.

"Speed doesn't exist," continues Boo cryptically. "If a young kid comes up and starts talking about speed, that's what we tell him. Speed is a result of technique, so forget about speed and think about technique: *That* will cause what you think of as 'speed.'

"You'd be surprised at how many drummers don't know what a single-stroke roll is," Boo adds. "They slow down and it's left, right, left, right, but when it gets up to speed, they're buzzing like crazy or playing one stroke with the left hand and seven with the right, filling in the space!"

That explains why you'll see a "spotter" at WFD events—someone kneeling beside a contestant, coaching, motivating—and watching for bogus technique to ensure that WFD standards are reflected in scores.

Boo and Craig are now affiliated with the NAMM Music Edge (www.musicedge.com), a program that enables storeowners to license the WFD program and send regional finalists to compete for thousands of dollars' worth of prizes at NAMM. The respective winners of fastest hands and feet categories can each divvy up $12,000 in prizes, including a year's supply of Pro-Mark sticks, an entire Pearl drumkit, Axis pedals, a set of Meinl cymbals, Warner videos, and Remo heads.

As was previously mentioned, Boo has closed down his Nashville Percussion Institute. He considers the WFD as the "road version" of that school. In fact, the WFD has been involved with Ozzfest and the Warped Tour. Explains Boo, "The show at NAMM can be really drummer-oriented. But out at, say, Ozzfest or the Warped Tour, it can be spectator-oriented, too. The punk drummers can come down and set a record and spectators can try and beat their favorite drummers. It gets sticks into non-drummers' hands."

If you attend a WFD event, you'll meet what McAfee calls the WFD "extended family." Says Boo, "It consists of Art Verdi, Johnny Rabb, Mike Mangini, Tim Waterson, Jotan Afanador, Seth Davis, and Sam LeCompte." Other colleagues of note include John Blackwell, Zoro, Travis Barker, Bobby Rondinelli, John "Bermuda" Schwartz, Rikki Rockett, Clyde Stubblefield, and Jabo Starks.

Art Verdi And The Art Of Drumming

A few years back, Art Verdi spied a WFD ad in *Modern Drummer*. He read about titleholder Johnny Rabb driving the Drumometer to 930 strokes per minute. "I figured I could do better than that," recalls Art. "I put the Drumometer on a Remo pad, and in my first try I got 1092!" Once he exceeded 1100, he sent videotaped verification to Boo McAfee. "After I broke Johnny Rabb's record in 2001, I've stayed on at the booth, helping kids."

Verdi will show them, for example, how to immobilize the wrist, thereby encouraging independent finger motion. He'll work with those interested in traditional grip, another area of expertise. Art says, "Buddy had a way of using his left thumb so that it became part of the movement of the stick, and he had that thumb trained to keep the stick in the sweet spot. When he did all those one-hand rolls, he didn't let that stick slip, otherwise he wouldn't have been able to keep that movement going. That half-inch sweet spot is thirty percent of your speed."

A common drummer failing, Verdi notes, is the tendency to waste motion by playing discrete upstrokes and downstrokes. Instead, Art shows how to whip the stick down and up in one fell swoop. "Another thing," he continues, "by jamming the stick into the drum, you're getting a bad sound. Doing it my way, you're drawing the sound out of the drum." (Art elaborates on this in his video, available at www.artverdi.com.)

Concerned about developing speed? Art advises that you work on endurance. "When practicing," he says, "don't play a groove for five minutes and then stop for a coffee. Instead, go for longer runs, such as you'd have to on a gig."

Mike Mangini The Speed Of Light

I witnessed Mike Mangini, the acclaimed drummer with the "apex" tom configuration, break his own record at NAMM, his sticks hovering barely an inch above the pad. A few years back, Boo introduced Mike to the Drumometer.

"I thought it was really fun," Mike recalls. "I was surprised at how hard it was in a certain way and easy in another. Stamina was easy because I've been playing all my life. But I had to learn to lower my stick heights. It's not necessarily something I do on the drumset, because I've got to hit harder and

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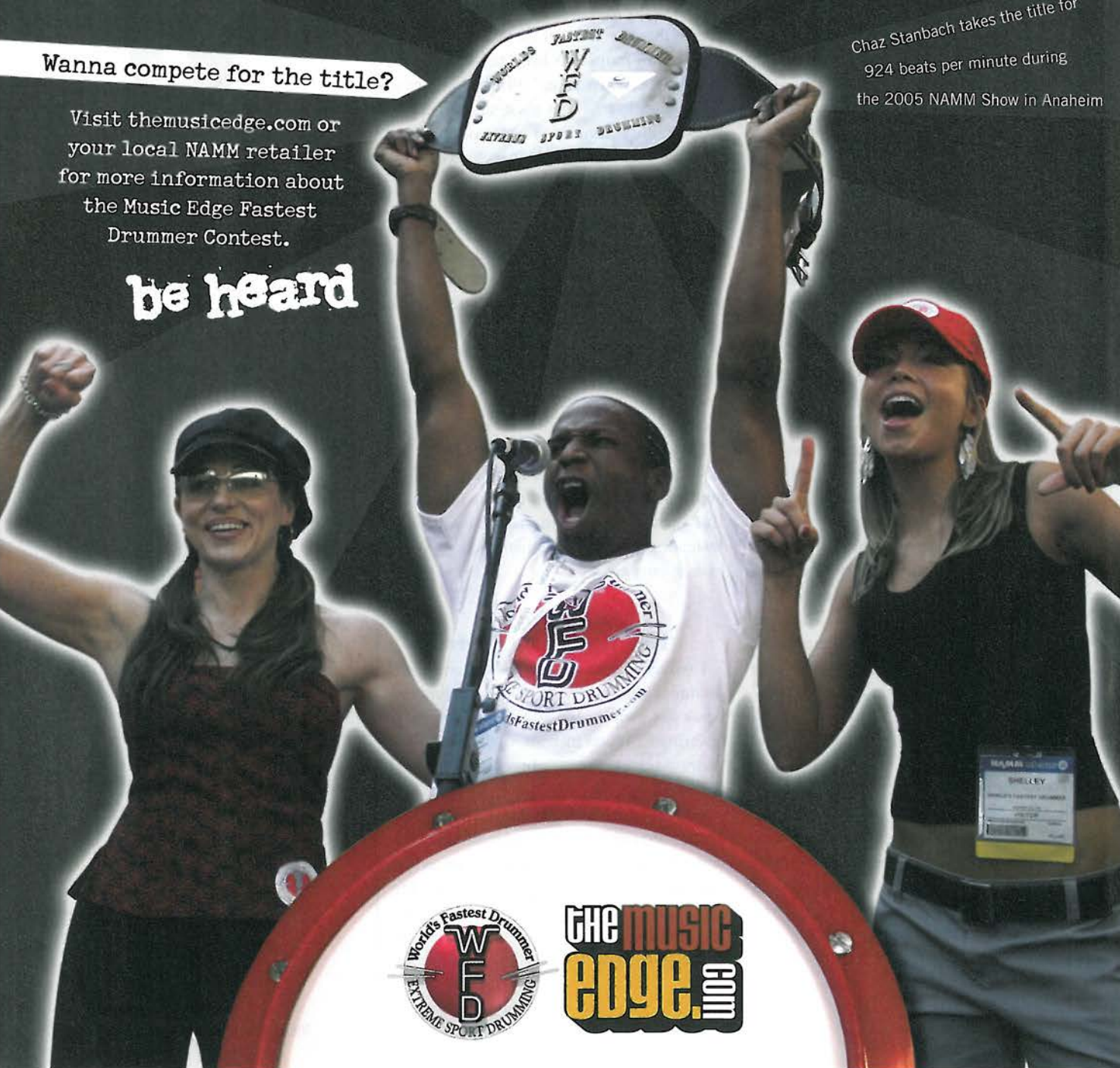

Chaz Stanbach takes the title for 924 beats per minute during the 2005 NAMM Show in Anaheim

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"I can tell you from the heart that I never would have made those speeds and broken records without the help of the other WFD guys." **—Mike Mangini**

Tim Waterson working with a young drummer at a WFD event

get a good sound. But the technique is valid, for example, in a lot of death metal, when you've got to hold a certain speed—and with one hand."

Mike makes an important distinction. "What we're doing with the Drumometer is all about speed," he admits. "It's not about music: They're as different as apples and...muffler parts! As a teacher, I can't stand the various prejudices against speed, or metal, or jazz, or whatever. It's sad because people who talk that way always have weak philosophical arguments and, besides, they're plain *mean*!

"I can tell you from the heart," continues Mike, "that I never would have made those speeds and broken records without the help of Jotan and the other WFD guys, who have now become my friends. Jotan says he plays his best when I'm around and it's the same with me. This thing is all from the heart."

Jotan Afanador Shakin' All Over

In this corner, from the Bronx, is Jotan Afanador. He echoes Mangini's words: "We're like brothers in this. It's cool because we push each other. Today he broke a record for hands, matched grip, so this will push me to take it back!"

Although Jotan is known for his hand speed, his feet aren't too shabby, either. "I'm pushing around 850," he says. "It's harder, though, because I don't get a lot of opportunities to play that stuff in my gigs. I play with the Tito Puente Big Band and I played on the Wayne Brady TV show, the Tom Arnold TV show,

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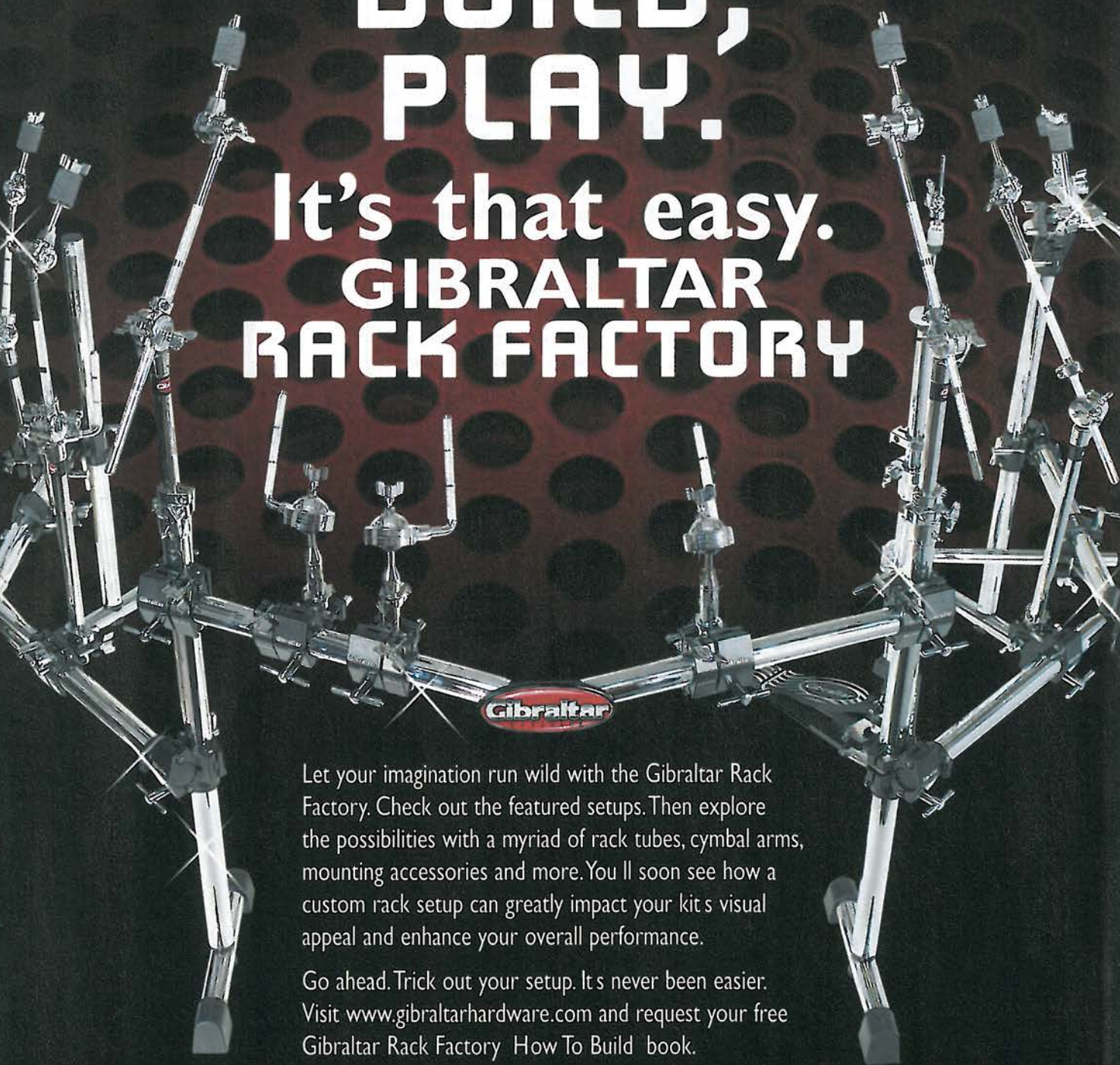

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and I work with a lot of artists where you can't play that way."

Jotan is a familiar figure at the WFD booth at NAMM. He sees a lot of drumming that's not up to snuff. "I see sloppy buzz rolls," he says, "where the drummer starts out with a single-stroke roll. Everything you play on the drumset should be so clean and precise that when anyone who doesn't know about music hears it, he can understand it. I'm into a lot of groove, too, but when I have to do something crazy around the drumset, it's good to know how to play fast and precise."

I asked Jotan about his notorious "shaking vibration" technique. "I developed a way of using wrist and fingers at the same time in matched grip," he replies. "The wrist is moving to the left and the fingers are coming up to the right. I twist the wrist to the right and the fingers come up automatically; it's like turning a knob. You see almost an 'electric vibration' or shake in the arm. Jim Chapin and Dennis Chambers love it! Some drummers have said that this takes drumming to another level, like the Moeller stroke."

Tim Waterson
Fleet Of Foot

Tim Waterson, the only Canadian in the WFD, explains how he became thick as thieves with the crew. "I saw an ad in *Modern Drummer*," he recalls, "that asked something like, Do you have what it takes to be the world's fastest drummer? If so, visit www.drumometer.com. I wanted to be the first person to play a thousand notes in sixty seconds with the hands *and* a thousand strokes with the feet. Boo had told me, 'If you can do it, we'll build this part of the competition around you. But be prepared, the Drumometer will humble you!'"

Although Tim achieved his goal in 2000, at one point a couple of years ago, it looked as if he would never drum again. "I had a car accident in November 2000," he recalls. "I was coming back from the airport and had all this good news—I had endorsements and I was starting to do clinics. And a car ran a red light and flipped me into the air. I had to go through chronic pain therapy. The only thing that kept me going was that I could still work my feet. I did 1153 for a TV special, and the guy from the Discovery Channel told me, 'Don't break your record before this airs because we want to claim that this is still the world record!

"Being the fastest means I can play at any tempo I want," Tim concludes. "I'm not going to cramp up." Visit his Web site, www.drumcanman.com, and you'll see mention of his recently released CD, *Silver Feet And An Angel's Voice*.

At The End Of The Day

I attended the finals and watched the "crowning" of this year's winners in a courtyard at NAMM. Although no records were broken, the contestants were impressive. Chaz Stanbach scored a stunning 924 on the Drumometer for fastest hands, while Matt Garrett stomped out 888 for fastest feet.

As the crowd dispersed, Art Verdi confided to me: "If a person buys a Drumometer and all they want to do is get high scores, that's not effective. You should use it to apply technique to an instrument to express yourself musically. That's what counts most to us at the WFD."

I then bumped into Johnny Rabb, who enthused, "I've been with the WFD since the beginning. We've experienced a lot of ribbing, but people are finally taking it seriously. This is a great event! It's fun *and* it's about serious technique. The guys involved in this are awesome, and I'm digging it!"

Beat These One Minute Records!

Jotan Afanador:
hands, 1,199 single strokes
Seth Davis:
hands, 1,200 double strokes
Sam LeCompte:
hands, 1,032 paradiddles
Mike Mangini:
hands, 1,202 single strokes
Art Verdi:
hands, 1,116 single strokes
Tim Waterson:
feet, 1,031 single strokes, 1,407 double strokes

I'm golden, I'm blue all at once.

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Tama Drums

Doin' It Their Way

by Rick Van Horn

You may have seen *MD*'s review of Tama's new Superstar drumkit in the June '05 issue. It's a pretty impressive series that offers a lot of professional features and quality at a surprisingly affordable price.

Now, it's certainly not unusual for a major drum manufacturer to introduce a new drumkit series. However, it's a *little* unusual for a manufacturer to discontinue a very successful line (in this case, Tama's venerable Rockstar) in order to give focus to the new series. And it's *very* unusual for that manufacturer to build an entirely new factory—in an entirely new *country*—in order to make the new series possible.

Starclassic Exotix
As the name implies, different combinations of exotic woods are the focus of Exotix. However, bubinga is usually the main component, in combination with another exotic wood as an outer ply.

A Tama Tour

Here's a quick overview of Tama's lines of drums, hardware, and accessories.

Starclassic Bubinga Omni-Tune

Tama's latest high-end creation is the Starclassic Bubinga Omni-Tune kit. It features a 100% bubinga shell for what the company describes as "power-sensitive" response, meaning that it reflects accurately—and musically—how hard or soft the drum is struck.

The kit is equipped with a Gladstone-style Omni-Tune system, which allows the top and bottom head of every drum to be tuned from the top. The Omni-Tune lugs are low-mass designs that attach to the shells at only one point per lug.

Starclassic Maple

Starclassic Maple drums feature super-thin maple shells complemented by die-cast hoops and Tama's Star-Cast free-suspension tom-mounting system. The drums are crafted in Tama's factory in Seto City, Japan. Due to the large number of available depths and finishes, some final assembly is performed in Bensalem, Pennsylvania to shorten the order time for the US market.

Starclassic Performer

Starclassic Performer drums feature 100% birch shells fitted with zinc die-cast hoops and the Star-Cast Mounting System. The drums' powerful, penetrating sound makes them popular with rockers, but they also have a respectable jazz following due to the availability of smaller-sized bass drums.

Superstar

Tama's new Superstar series feature birch plies, with an inner ply of basswood, as well as sharp, precise bearing edges. The shells are fitted with new Soundbridge high-tension, low-mass lugs, which are said to offer increased shell protection and stability while allowing the shell to resonate to its fullest. Resonance is further enhanced with the Star-Cast mounting system combined with die-cast hoops. Superstar SK drums have standard covered finishes, Superstar EFX SX drums have vintage covered finishes, and Superstar Custom SL drums feature lacquer finishes applied to an outer ply of basswood.

Swingstar

The entry-level Swingstar is Tama's oldest drum series name. The present version features Philippine mahogany shells. The drums and hardware have been upgraded many times over the past five years. Swingstar is now available as five-piece complete kits (including throne and cymbals) as well as individually ordered drums.

Stagestar

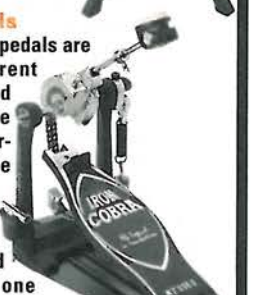
Stagestar kits are similar in construction to Swingstars, but have been "downsized" for use by pros needing a compact kit for small stages and studios, as well as by smaller players and students.

Snare Drums

Tama offers over sixty different snare drums in a wide variety of sizes and materials. Of particular note are signature snare drums by Kenny Aronoff, Bill Bruford, Stewart Copeland, Simon Phillips, Mike Portnoy, and Lars Ulrich. Also famous (and somewhat expensive) are Tama's snare drums of bell brass.

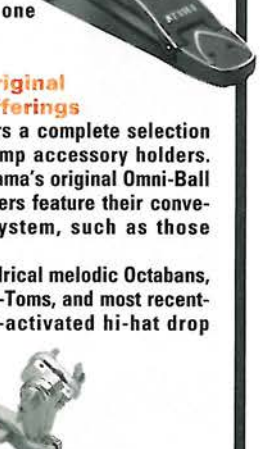
Stands

Tama lays claim to the creation of the first heavy-duty hardware. Their Roadpro hardware now sports toothless Quick-Set cymbal tilters, and comes with all Starclassic and Superstar drumkits. Tama also offers less expensive Swingstar double-braced and Swingstar lightweight stands. Also available are ten different thrones, including the professional 1st Chair models.



Iron Cobra Drum Pedals

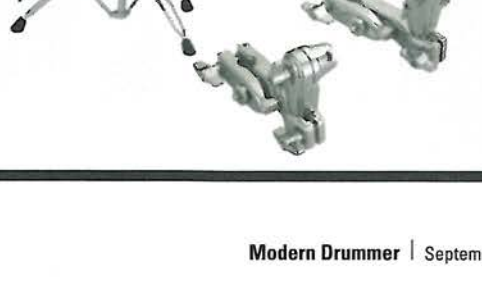
Highly adjustable Iron Cobra pedals are available with three different cams: off-set, uniform, and strap-drive. All three are available in double-pedal versions, and there is also one left-hand off-set cam double version. Tama's pedal line also includes more affordable Iron Cobra Jr. single and double pedals, as well as one inexpensive standard model.



Other Original Tama Offerings

Tama offers a complete selection of multi-clamp accessory holders. Some feature Tama's original Omni-Ball system, while others feature their convenient FastClamp system, such as those shown here.

Tama also created cylindrical melodic Octabans, the Gong Bass Drum, Tymp-Toms, and most recently, the Cobra Clutch foot-activated hi-hat drop clutch.



But that's just what Tama did. They've discontinued the entry-level Rockstar series, and are offering the significantly higher-quality Superstar series for only a couple hundred dollars more. And instead of manufacturing the new Superstar line in their Japanese factory (where high-end drums are made) or in their Taiwanese facility (where budget kits are made), Tama opened an entirely new factory in Quangzhou, China.

It's just another example of how Tama's success over the years has largely been built on the fact that they do things their own way. Tama's designs, their manufacturing processes, and even the ways they market their drums have always been a little different from other manufacturers.

A Quick History

MD has covered the history of Tama drums in past features. But here's a quick refresher. The drums are made

Drum Production

High-end Tama drums begin life in the Japanese factory as maple, birch, and other veneer laminates, which are made exceptionally thin. Tama believes that by using a large number of plies that are thinner individually, and staggering their seams within the shell molds, their thin shells can be stronger than other shells of greater thickness.

Seamless cylinder molds are employed in order to avoid the possibility of any warping during the heated molding process. It takes more time and effort, but Tama believes it's critical to ensure a truly round shell.

The edges of the laminates are cut on a diagonal. The operator hammers the laminates into the mold, and the slanted edges force the laminates to spread outward, keeping the seams tight and the shells accurate. Then an inside form is placed into the mold, exerting further pressure outward to meld the plies into a solid, round body.

Ken Hoshino is general manager of Hoshino Gakki in Japan.

Various cutting and sanding operations are employed to get each shell to its perfect dimension. Some drums receive Sound Focus Rings, which are sliced from previously molded shells to maintain ply consistency. The rings are optional on Starclassic toms and bass drums. But they're standard on snare drums, where Tama believes them to be critical for reasons of tone and structural stability.

Painted finishes involve multiple steps of repeated sanding, sealing, painting, drying, and buffing. A combination of computer-controlled and hand painting is used to ensure perfect color matching from drum to drum within a given kit.

Tama believes that the machine used to cut bearing edges on high-end drums in their Japanese factory is the most advanced in the industry. As the drumshell rotates on a turntable, a high-powered camera views and records any discrepancies in the edge—measured in hundred-thousandths of an inch. This information is fed into a computer, which adjusts the cutter accordingly as the drum rotates a second time. This ensures that the peak of the bearing edge is dead center in the shell around the entire drum. Snare beds are cut at the same time.

No human being could visually perceive the exact width and any irregularities in a shell the way this machine can. And no human operator could continually adjust a cutting tool in such minute increments, as the drum is turning. Still, even after the drums' edges have been cut by such a sophisticated machine, the results are checked by a technician who places each shell on a precision-made flat plate of metal. The human touch is still elemental to the manufacturing process.

Tama Starclassic Maple drums don't receive badges. Instead, they have their series name imprinted onto the shells themselves, under the final topcoat. Starclassic Performer Birch drums have a metal badge pressed in with a grommet around the air hole.

On limited-edition Exotix drums, paua shell inlays are carefully hand-installed in shallow grooves cut into the shells. Artistry is definitely an ingredient of Tama's professional-level drums.

Computer assistance is used in the drilling operation, to ensure that hardware holes are drilled in the same exact place on every shell, time after time. Following that operation, drums are given final inspections as part of the assembly process.

Dr. Yasuda is Tama's R&D guru. His latest creation is a two-part locking washer for tensioning systems: a rubber ring covered by a steel ring. Impact shock from the struck drumhead is cushioned by the rubber ring, while the steel ring holds the tension under the tension-rod head. Thus the lugs don't back out under impact.

Tama believes that the edge-cutting machine used in the Japanese factory is the most advanced in the industry.

Tama employs automation where it saves time and labor and provides consistency. This computerized drilling machine in the Chinese factory is based on a similar one used in Japan.

These solid-cylinder one-piece molds are key to Tama's shell-making operation. Identical molds are used in Japan and China.

The Guangzhou factory is large, light, and spacious. It also is equipped with the drum industry's newest manufacturing equipment, like this buffing machine.

The Chinese workforce at Tama's Guangzhou factory is young, enthusiastic, and proud of their new creation: the Superstar drumkit in the foreground.

by a Japanese company called Hoshino Gakki. In 1965 Hoshino introduced "Star" drumkits targeted at the low-end market. Nine years later they launched the Tama brand on drumkits called Imperialstar, Royalstar, and Swingstar. Over the years since then, lines like Artstar, Granstar, and the current Starclassic have debuted.

Not only has Tama done things their way, but in many cases they've done them *first*. For example, it was Tama that introduced drummers to double-braced tripods, boom cymbal stands, Octaban melodic toms, Gong bass drums, offset cymbal tilters that fold over for protected transport, X-Hat auxiliary closed hi-hats, and multi-clamps for the attachment of hardware accessories. Many of these innovations have since become standard equipment offered by virtually all major manufacturers.

When it comes to drum manufacturing, Tama's philosophy is simple: Human hands and skill do every operation for which they offer the best results. Mechanized technology is employed when it offers similar advantages. This philosophy has enabled the company to reduce hand labor, and thus to keep high-end drum manufacturing in Japan. But the same philosophy applies to the manufacture of Superstar drums in the Guangzhou factory.

Hoshino Japan

Tama's headquarters is in Seto City, just outside Nagoya. General Manager Ken Hoshino oversees manufacturing operations of Tama's professional Starclassic Maple and Starclassic Performer Birch kits, along with limited-edition Exotix kits, and many of Tama's wood snare drums.

The Seto City factory is also the domain of Dr. Yasuda, the legendary head of Tama's R&D team. It was Dr. Yasuda who, upon seeing a drummer playing a kit with an extended cymbal arm taped to a stand, came up with the design for the industry's first multi-clamp. Dr. Yasuda also designed many of the unique machines used to produce Tama drums.

Hoshino Guangzhou

Guangzhou is the modern name for the ancient Chinese merchant city of Canton, located a hundred miles north of Hong Kong on the Pearl River. The Hoshino Guangzhou factory was completed in January of 2004. General manager Tony Kawamoto heads a team of five Japanese managers who supervise a workforce of more than a hundred employees.

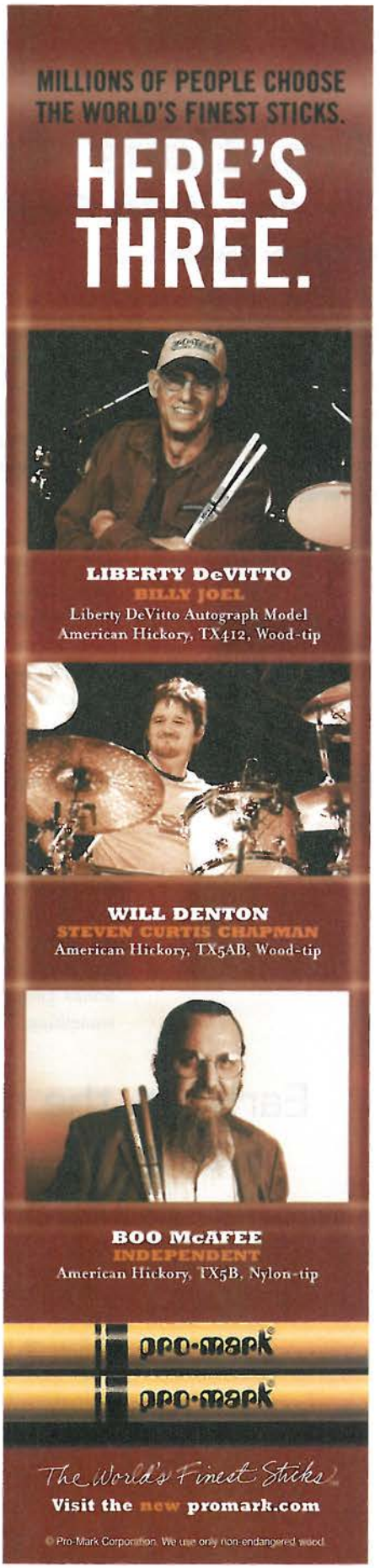
Several other drum manufacturers have established Chinese operations for the manufacture of low-end drums. But, characteristically, Tama has taken a different approach. They figured that the lower material and labor costs available in China could be combined with the advanced technology and production methods originated in Japan, in order to create "a superior professional instrument at affordable prices for a broader market"—the new Superstar series. Production is expected to average between 1,500 and 2,000 drumsets per month. The factory is also making Iron Cobra pedals, 1st Chair thrones, and Road Pro hardware.

The Oriental Connection

Production methods used in Tama's Guangzhou factory in China are modeled on those used in Japan. These include solid one-piece molds, as well as the same precise sanding, drilling, and machining operations. The one exception is the edge-cutting process, which does not employ the Japanese factory's unique CAD-CAM edge-cutting machine.

In fact, the operation in Guangzhou has some advantages over the "home" factory. There's much more production space, and the machines are all new. Of course, the workforce is relatively new as well. Their experience can't compare to that of the technicians in Japan, many of whom have been with the company for twenty years or more. But the Chinese workers are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They're already turning out excellent drums, and their work is only going to get better as they gain more experience on the job.

As usual, Tama is doing things their way.



Emotions And Your Drumming

Playing With Passion Is Key

by Liberty DeVitto

Sitting behind my drumset in a live situation makes me feel like the most powerful person in the room. I keep the members of the band together and we travel as one musical unit throughout the night. I feel it's up to me to relay a passion and an emotion that will move people—and maybe even force them to stand up and cheer. And I'll go through many different emotions in one night, from song to song.

When I sit behind my drums in a recording studio, it's time to be creative. I'm like a writer sitting behind a desk. The heads on the drums are the blank paper on which I'll create something new. My sticks are my pencils. They'll translate my thoughts to the drumheads. In the same way you know what a writer is thinking and feeling when he or she creates the words that you read, hopefully you can hear the emotions of what *I'm* thinking and feeling as I place stick to head.

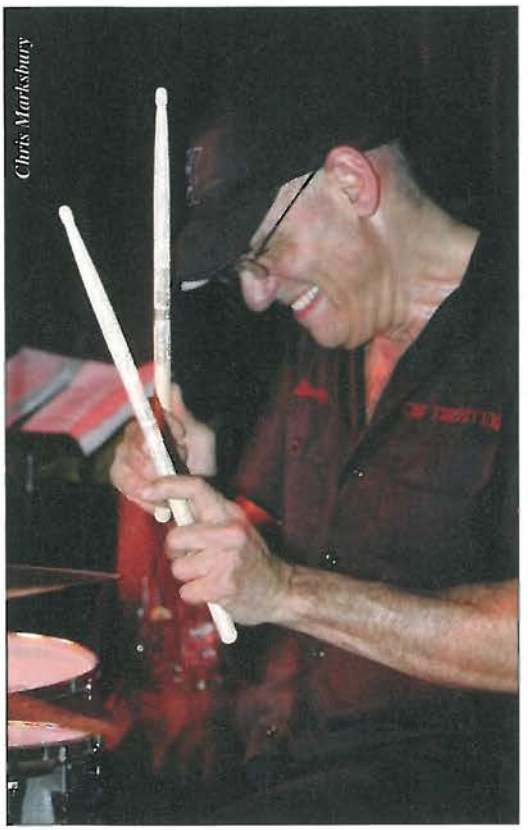
My Drums

Anybody reading this article probably loves their drums. To me, the drumset is a giver of life. It's my way of self-expression and a channel for my energy. Early on, the drums gave me a title and a reason to live. I *became* a drummer. The drums gave me a want and a desire to be good at something. The drums even made me popular.

Early on, the drums gave me a title and a reason to live. I *became* a drummer.

When I was twelve years old, I had my first real set. I would sleep on the floor in my room underneath it. Those drums became a part of me. They were always there, like a best friend. They were there to celebrate my greatest achievements, and they were there to catch me when I fell.

Of course, without me, my drums are silent. They have no voice. They're just a combination of wood, plastic, chrome, and brass held together by glue, lugs, and wing nuts. They wait for me to provide the emotional content to make them come alive. To me, that's what drumming is all about.


Chris Marksbury

Physical Release

My drums have helped me physically. I put so much energy into playing and have taken that approach to such a level that I've actually been called a "musical athlete." And frankly, there's nothing like a good sweat behind the drums to make you feel good.

I like my muscles to be warm. I like it when I start to sweat about three minutes into the first song. It feels like all of the impurities are coming out of my body as I rip through my drumset. And the more my body warms up, the easier it is to play at a level where I'm most comfortable.

Playing drums is so much more satisfying than

going to a health club. I eventually break into a "runner's high" and don't feel any aches any more. Even my head clears of any bad thoughts from the day. I *am* the drum now. I'm bathed in sweat and I'm drumming like it's the last time I'll ever do it. (I've decided that if I die while I'm drumming, that's okay!)

All that said, there are times when I think I hate my drums. It might be because of a bad gig, where the sound is bad. Maybe it's an outdoor event where it's cold and I can't warm up. Or maybe the other players aren't that compatible and I'm fighting a tempo battle with one of them. (That can feel like I'm paddling up stream without a paddle.) In those instances, I can't wait for the gig to be over. On the other hand, when the groove is locked and in the pocket, it's like riding down a river on a rubber tube in the summer with a cool drink in your hand.

Personalities

You can tell a drummer's personality even before he takes the stage. Just the sight of his or her drumset will tell you if the player is conservative, extremely radical, or somewhere in between—and that's cool. There are no rules for a drumset, either in how someone plays it or how it's set up.

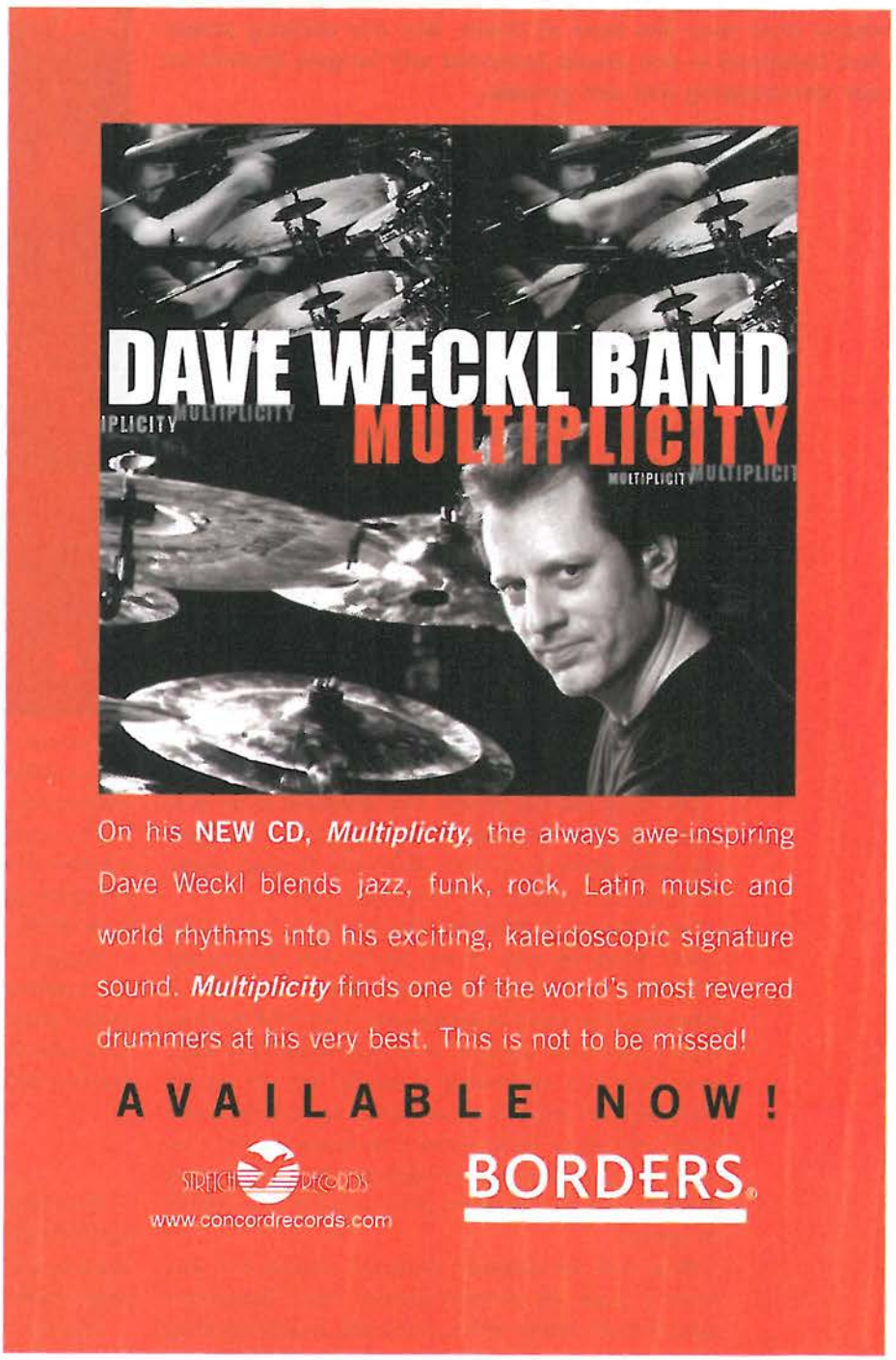
I've seen players perform on sets as small as a bass drum and a snare, or as big as four bass drums, eight toms, and three snare drums. I've seen sets with just a hi-hat, another with fifteen cymbals hanging off of it, and even a full-on drumset with no cymbals at all! I've seen drummers using vintage kits as well as totally modern electronic sets. There seems to be no limit to the drummer's expression for color and design of a drumset.

But no matter what the gear, the drumkit is the place we all go to express ourselves. I don't care what a drummer is about, as long as he or she plays with passion and puts their entire soul into what they're doing.

The heart is the center of a human being. If music comes from your heart, then it must be at the center of your life. I know my love for drumming starts in my heart. I can't help it, I *must* drum. I feel it in my soul.

My body is just a vessel that carries the rhythm. I've got it inside of me, just like someone else may have a passion to write stories or teach. For me, rhythm has always been there and always will be. If you play the drums, I'm sure it's inside of you too.

Liberty DeVitto was Billy Joel's drummer of choice for over thirty years, helping him create history with numerous hit records and many unforgettable live concerts. The previous excerpt is from a forthcoming book DeVitto is working on.



Taming Your Live Tempos

Combining Creativity With Control

by Jeremy Hummel

As musicians, one of the biggest thrills we get is to perform in a live setting. However, as drummers, our biggest responsibility is to provide solid timekeeping, even under the most exciting conditions. We can have chops that rival the best of them, but our staying power and livelihood in the music business will largely depend on our timekeeping and our groove.

Paul La Raia

I don't know of any gigging drummer who doesn't feel that he or she could improve on timing and tempos in some way. Each song has its own speed limit. You can get away with being a little fast or slow, but any more than that and the song police will come for you!

In the land of live music, most of us prefer not to use a click. But finding the proper groove or pulse for a song without one can be a challenge. This is especially true when you consider the numerous factors that can affect a performance. For example, how much sleep did you get the night before? Did you consume any stimulants (caffeine) or depressants (alcohol) before the show? How many people are in the crowd, cheering you on and pumping up your adrenaline?

The bottom line is that on any given night, there may be some songs that are too fast or slow. To avoid that problem, here are some tools that I've found to be helpful in not letting tempos get out of hand.

Pretend You're Playing A Different Instrument

One thing that has proven very beneficial to me is to pretend that I'm the guitar or bass player. Yes, the drummer holds down the groove. However, in many songs, the guitar riff needs to "sit" in a certain zone.

For example, in Breaking Benjamin we had a song called "Break My Fall." It was one of those tricky songs that didn't have too much leeway. One or two bpms in either direction could be detrimental to the feel. So every night I paid close attention to the guitar part and imagined that I was strumming it myself. I'd ask myself, "Does this feel good? Is there enough space between the notes? Do these little slides I'm doing breathe just right?" By putting myself in someone else's shoes, more often than not we found that perfect spot in the center of the pocket.

Most of us are musically proficient enough to at least strum a guitar. We do have rhythm, right? Experiment some time by sitting with a guitar and strumming along to some of your band's songs. Hearing and feeling a tune from a different perspective could open up a whole new angle on the song.

The same theory applies in pretending you're the vocalist. Sing along during the song. If you're having problems spitting the words out, chances are you need to back off the gas pedal a bit.

Whenever we play music, we should be aware of what our bandmates are doing. In order for a song to have the proper groove and obtain the optimum level of musicality, we need to pay attention to other factors besides how good *we* feel playing it.

Use Down Time To Your Advantage

Most of us have played in bands where the singer's patter between songs can be long-winded. The rest of the band is left to pretend as though they're finding the singer's jokes or shtick new and funny.

This is a perfect opportunity to get into the feel of the

In the land of live music, most of us prefer not to use a click. But finding the proper groove or pulse for a song without one can be a challenge.

next song. Hum the riff to yourself, or sing some of the vocals. Then get your hi-hat working by keeping the time. That way when it's time to count everyone in, you're confident as to where the song needs to sit.

Even if the singer isn't talking, there are usually at least ten or more seconds between each song in which to find the pulse of the next tune. This can be done while you're reaching for a swig of your drink. (And heck, if you can multi-task, you can still check out the girl in the front row or tighten your hi-hat clutch.) The point is that there are opportunities within a set that we can take advantage of.

Be The One Who Makes Out The Set List

This can be a *huge* factor in helping your grooves. In all of my years of being around musicians and bands, I can count on one hand the number of people I encountered who *wanted* to make out the set list. Most people have the attitude of "just put me on stage." This task can be especially unattractive to others if you are in a cover band doing two or three sets a night.

A good set list not only helps with your grooves, but also with the flow of the show. In a typical set, there are three basic types of tunes: fast, mid-tempo, and ballads. How fast or slow you count in a tune can often be determined by the preceding tune. You obviously don't want to follow "I Wanna Be Sedated" by the Ramones with "Yellow" by Coldplay. Finding a flow with that segue could be maddening.

Couple a few fast songs together, then gradually slow the feel of the show down by doing some mid-tempo tunes. Then add the ballads. Unless you're in a specialty band (like a high-energy dance band, or a slow blues act) I believe that you should never stay in one tempo range for more than three or four songs.

So get involved and talk to your bandleader about helping to make the set list. He or she may even let you take the reins completely.

Record Your Live Shows

This may be stating the obvious, but live recordings can not only be helpful to every individual in your band, they will ultimately make the whole group better as a unit. By studying your live performances, you can discover tendencies that you and/or your bandmates have. For example, you might notice that there are certain songs that always seem to be too fast or too slow. Once you make this discovery, you can then begin to figure out why this is happening.

You may also notice nuances in your playing that you never realized before. For example, I found that in certain spots my fills would slightly decrease in volume. I would never have picked up on that without hearing it after the fact.

Put Them All Together

By employing the tips I've offered here, you should get a better handle on the optimum tempo and feel for all of your band's material. Remember, in any live performance, you're in control of the band. So it's critical to be in control of yourself.

Jeremy Hummel was an original member of Breaking Benjamin. He helped that group achieve platinum status with their second release, We Are Not Alone. *He has since turned his efforts to session work and drum instruction in Pennsylvania. Jeremy can be reached at his Web site, www.jeremyhummel.com.*

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Everything Old Is New Again

Zildjian A Fast Crashes And Splashes And New K Constantinople Models

Zildjian has recently added models to the original A Zildjian series, which Avedis Zildjian III created in 1929. New A Zildjian Fast crashes are said to produce a strong initial attack with a very quick decay, while still maintaining a "bright, full-bodied, musical sound." They're available in 14" ($208), 15" ($228), 16" ($251), 17" ($276), and 18" ($297) sizes.

A Zildjian Fast splashes, offered in 8" ($122), 10" ($143), and 12" ($166) sizes, have a smaller bell than traditional splashes in order to promote a bright, quick sound. The Fast crashes and splashes all feature traditional A Zildjian lathing techniques, paper-thin weights, and traditional finish.

At the other end of the sonic spectrum, Zildjian now offers five new 20" ($583) and 22" ($689) K Constantinople ride cymbals. They include a Hi Bell thin ride–high, a Hi Bell thin ride–low, a Hi Bell medium-thin ride–low, a Hi Bell Dry ride, and a Flat ride.

K Constantinople Hi Bell rides feature a bell shape taken from a 100-year-old pair of Zildjian orchestral cymbals. The large surface area of the bell is said to provide a wide range of frequencies. The Hi Bell rides also feature new "spiral" lathing done from the bell to the middle of the cymbal, with traditional K Constantinople lathing continued to the edge. The spiral lathing prevents the cymbal from generating too much "wash," while still allowing the ride to be "crashable" and providing a good stick sound.

The only model featuring full spiral lathing is the Hi Bell Dry ride, which is available in a thin weight and 22" size only. This design prevents the cymbal from opening up as much as the half spiral lathed models while keeping the cymbal crashable. Meanwhile, the 20" and 22" K Constantinople Flat rides feature a thin weight, a nice stick "click," and a "crystal-y" cymbal sound that has a lot of air underneath it.

The K Constantinople line has also been expanded to include 13" hi-hats ($614) that have a thin top and a medium-weight bottom, and are higher in pitch than their 14" counterparts. These hi-hats are said to have a very dry and warm "chick" sound, yet to be full-bodied with plenty of presence.

K Constantinoples are hand-lathed by skilled artisans using old-style cutting tools. Pits and other surface impurities, which modern finishing processes remove, are retained, preserving the original tonal quality.

(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

If You Build It, They Will Come

LP Custom Conga Shop And Lug-Edge Giovanni Series Conga Bag

Latin Percussion's online Custom Conga Shop lets you literally design your own custom drum. Your computer screen is your "drawing board." You start by selecting a conga from among LP's Classic wood or Patato fiberglass models. Then you choose from among 30 wood finishes or 190 fiberglass colors (including glitters). Hardware finish options include titanium, gold-tone, chrome, rainbow, brushed nickel, and black powder. Available rims include LP Traditional, X, or Z models. Heads can be natural skin or synthetic. Drums are completed with the LP Mic' Lug and a custom-engraved nameplate.

Once the drum has been designed, you can hear it before you print the order form. Then you take the form to an LP dealer, and six to eight weeks later receive your customized drum.

To protect your custom drum, you might want to consider LP's new Lug-Edge Giovanni series conga bag. The thickly padded bag is made from black denier ballistic nylon said to be many times stronger than conventional nylon or other bag materials. A unique inverted design affords stability, while a large adjustable shoulder strap makes carrying easy. An ample gear pocket and heavy-duty zipper are additional features. List price is $159.

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Toca's top-of-the-line Limited Edition congas and bongos feature Asian oak contemporary Afro-Cuban-style shells fitted with premium bison heads for volume and resonance. Toca's Easy Play hoops are said to open up the response while cushioning hands during long gigs. New Bordeaux and Burnished Maple finishes are complemented by gold titanium-plated hardware. Six tuning lugs per head promote tuning ease, precise location of pitches, and consistent head tension. Four-bolt lug mounting contributes the ultimate in shell support. The 11" quinto lists for $539.50, the 11¾" conga for $589.50, the 12½" tumba for $639.50, and the matching bongos for $389.50.

At the other end of the performance scale, Toca's Synergy Freestyle djembes and doumbeks are designed to be a hit with kids of all ages, and a staple of drum circles. The lightweight drums can be easily grasped by small hands or carried around for hours by adults. Their seamless one-piece shells offer resonance and response, while being durable enough to survive hard use.

Djembes are equipped with nylon rope tuning, and are available in 9" ($74), 10" ($99), and 12" ($149) head sizes. Doumbeks ($59) are fitted with glued 9" heads. Both feature a protective rubber bottom and come in attractive Snake and Bali Red ethnic-style finishes.

(973) 479-6903, www.tocapercussion.com.

Without A Leg To Stand On

Gibraltar No-Leg Snare Stand

Gibraltar's No Leg snare stand ($104.50) is designed to create extra space for pedals and to keep drum setups clean. This stand option removes the tripod base from the setup, yet holds the snare drum solidly in place.

Drummers can use Gibraltar's SC-EA100 Extension Arm with a grabber clamp attached to the No Leg Snare Stand, and mount the tube section to a vertical rack tube with an SC-GRSMC or SC-GRSSMC Multi Clamp. Gibraltar's line of custom mounts and accessories are designed and sized to fit most major brands and many generic brands of drums.

(860) 509-8888, www.gibraltarhardware.com.

New Kids In The Class

Paiste Expands Signature Class

Paiste's Signature class is being augmented by 22" Full, Mellow, and Dry rides to reflect recent trends towards larger ride sizes. New Dark Metal 20" and 22" rides offer a contemporary, heavy rock/metal ride sound with Signature characteristics. And the 20" Flanger ride, 12" Flanger bell, and 13" Mega Cup chime (formerly Exotic/Percussion models) join the series as a result of the reorganization of Paiste's overall cymbal program.

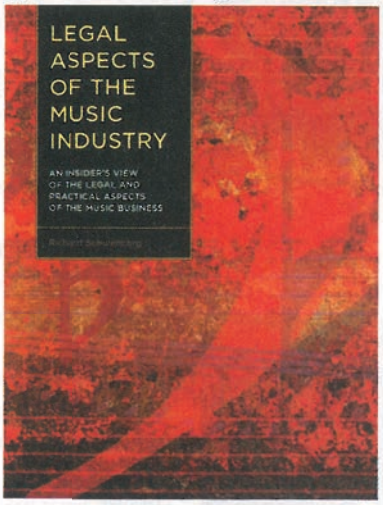
Paiste's New Signature class was inaugurated in 2004 with the introduction of Dark Energy cymbals. That line is now expanded with a Dark Energy Mark I splash in 8" and 10" sizes, as well as a Dark Energy Mark I crash in a 20" size. Also new are the 20" Dark Dry ride Mark I and the 20" Light Dark ride Mark I. Both rides are said to be light in weight, extremely musical, and very controllable, with dark, complex harmonics that make them superb jazz cymbals.

(800) 472-4783, www.paiste.com.

The Reference Shelf

Legal Aspects Of The Music Industry

by Richard Schulenberg **(Billboard Books)**



This book, by the one-time head of the legal department of Paramount Pictures' music division and later head of the CBS West Coast business affairs department, is a valuable reference for anyone interested in the music industry. Features include an analysis of the ongoing battle between copyright holders and end users who feel entitled to download as much free music as they can, a chapter on digital transmission that includes comments on the royalty provisions found in contracts covering downloaded music, tips on how to avoid pitfalls that often cause groups to self-destruct, and much more. The 584-page hardcover book lists for $35.

(646) 654-5455, www.wgpub.com.

Rock Drumset Solos

by Sperie Karas **(Hal Leonard)**

This book provides a collection of eight challenging solo pieces for drummers who are interested in supplementing their normal lesson material. It can also help to expand a drummer's recital and solo competition repertoire. List price is $5.95.

(414) 774-3630, www.halleonard.com.

And What's More

CODA bongos and congas are said to have professional features at an entry-level price. They feature Contour Rhythm rims for easier and longer playability, natural hide heads for a true, clear tone, and rugged birch shells in natural or burgundy finish.

The bongos ($77.98) are fitted with a tough cast bottom for any kind of playing environment. Congas come in 10"/11" sets at $279.98. They include L-brackets for stand mounting. Single ($41.98 per pair) or double ($45.98 each) conga stands are available.

(415) 570-09970, www.codadrums.com.

VATER PERCUSSION has added a camouflage T-shirt to their clothing line. The new camouflage shirt runs $12.95 for Sm, Med, Lg, and XL sizes, and $15.95 for XXL. Vater clothing products can be purchased online.

(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com.

GATOR's new Stix Quiver is a compact, portable stick pouch. It has a durable leatherette exterior and a grommet at the top to make it easy to hang off a drum lug for quick access. List price is $29.99.

(813) 221-4191, www.gatorcases.com.

LUDWIG has a new line of promotional apparel that puts "the most famous name on drums" on hoodies, jerseys, duffle bags, caps, and other trendy items. These are available from any Ludwig dealer or by going online. New styles and fashions will be offered as they become available.

(574) 522-1675, www.ludwig-drums.com

ZILDJIAN's 2005 *Z Time* magazine features over 300 Zildjian artists, a removable product catalog, and articles on the hottest drummers playing today. Other articles include tributes to the late Armand Zildjian and Elvin Jones, and features on the development of several cymbal lines. Copies are available through Zildjian dealers.

(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

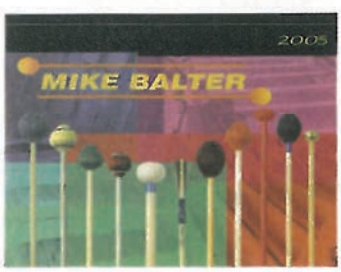
TOCA PERCUSSION has introduced a new 32-page color catalog to celebrate its twelfth year. The catalog features five artist illustrations, each beautifully crafted and capturing Toca's "Just Play" tag-line theme. The catalog also displays new products, with some photos enlarged to allow the consumer to appreciate salient features. A full-color spread features over sixty Toca Percussion players.

(973) 479-6903, www.tocapercussion.com.

PURESOUND's Speedball bass drum beaters are available with longer shafts to facilitate more comfortable performance and a better sound on 24", 26", and 28" bass drums. The new beaters feature the same self-aligning head, lightweight yet strong stainless steel shaft, and adjustable weight as the standard Speedball models. The P-SBLP (plastic), P-SBLF (felt), and P-SBLR (rubber) long-shaft Speedballs list for $32.95 each.

Puresound has also improved the playing surface on the standard and long-shaft rubber models. The new surface features a higher-quality rubber and an improved adhesive and mounting system that is guaranteed not to delaminate under normal playing conditions.

(818) 990-1562, www.puresoundpercussion.com.



MIKE BALTER MALLETS has released a new 20-page color catalog that showcases the full line of Balter percussion mallets. The products are featured by individual category, including vibe, marimba, xylophone, bell timpani, and cymbal mallets. Also included are Louie Bellson drumset mallets, marching mallets, and several mallet bags and cases.

(888) MALLETS, www.mikebalter.com.

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Jeffrey Kennison

Jeffrey Kennison's musical career began at the age of eleven and has continued for forty years. In that time, Jeffrey has traveled around the world playing everything from rock 'n' roll to country, and from jazz-fusion to funk, including performances with Bo Diddley, The Chiffons, and The Del Vikings. His current gig—a Santana tribute band called Wide Open, based in Denver, Colorado—showcases Jeffrey's abilities in the Latin-rock genre.

In addition to a regular schedule of live gigs and studio sessions, Jeffrey also maintains a private studio, where he teaches students of all ages and experience levels. In his teaching, Jeffrey focuses on the basics, stating, "I'm a firm believer that rudiments and fundamental sticking are both extremely important."

From Jeffrey's demo CD, it's apparent that his touring and teaching experience helped him become a diverse drummer who slides easily between styles, combining advanced technique with a musical touch. Jeffrey demonstrates these skills on several kits, including a set of Noble & Cooleys and a Yamaha Beech Custom kit. He uses a variety of Paiste, Sabian, and Zildjian cymbals depending on the sound needed for the gig.

Chloe

Eleven-year-old Chloe is not your typical pre-teen. While she does enjoy "normal" activities such as soccer, art, and hanging out with her friends, Chloe is also the drumming half of Seattle, Washington's critically acclaimed band Smoosh. With Chloe's sister, Asya, on keyboards and vocals, Smoosh has gained national exposure touring with Jimmy Eat World and sharing the stage with Pearl Jam, The Presidents Of The United States Of America, Death Cab For Cutie, Sleater-Kinney, and Cat Power.

Smoosh's debut CD, *She Like Electric* (Pattern 25 Records, www.pattern25.com) has received rave reviews in *Alternative Press*, *Vice*, *Jane*, *Seattle Weekly*, *Boston Globe*, and many other publications. The duo has also been interviewed on the news network CNN and featured on NBC's *The Today Show*.

Chloe's drumming career began a few years ago, after the purchase of a six-piece Mapex Junior drumset and Sabian cymbals. She soon began taking lessons with Death Cab For Cutie drummer Jason McGerr at the Seattle Drum School. In addition to Jason, Chloe cites Janet Weiss of Sleater-Kinney and Latin percussion master Poncho Sanchez as major influences.

On *She Like Electric*, Chloe's drumming is surprisingly mature and creative for someone so young. Her drum parts are well crafted, complementing Smoosh's catchy melodies while also offering a twist of the unexpected.

Jason Hartless Jr.

Eleven-year-old Jason Hartless Jr. of Detroit, Michigan started drumming before he could walk, and was playing on his first drumset by the age of two. At age six he began playing club gigs that ranged stylistically from double-bass metal to classic swing.

In 2003, video footage of Jason made its way to Corky Laing, drummer for the classic rock band Mountain. Corky contacted Jason's family with an offer to produce Jason's debut CD, *First Division* (www.jasonhartlessjr.com). Guitarists Richie Scarlet (Ace Frehley Band, Sebastian Bach) and Jim McCarty (Mitch Ryder, Cactus, The Rockets) also contributed to the project. Partial proceeds from the sale of this CD will be donated to the Disabled American Veterans.

Jason enjoyed a considerable amount of exposure in the Detroit area in 2004, including a story on Fox News, an onstage appearance with Mountain at the DTE Music Amphitheater, and regular airplay on WRIF Radio's hard rock/metal rotation list. He also performed a twelve-hour drum marathon to raise money and donations for Toys For Tots and performed at a fundraiser for the Rainbow Make A Wish Foundation.

Jason endorses Pearl, Remo, and Vater Percussion, and uses Sabian cymbals. He cites Corky Laing, Eric Singer, Tommy Clufetos, Keith Moon, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, and Mick Tucker as major influences.

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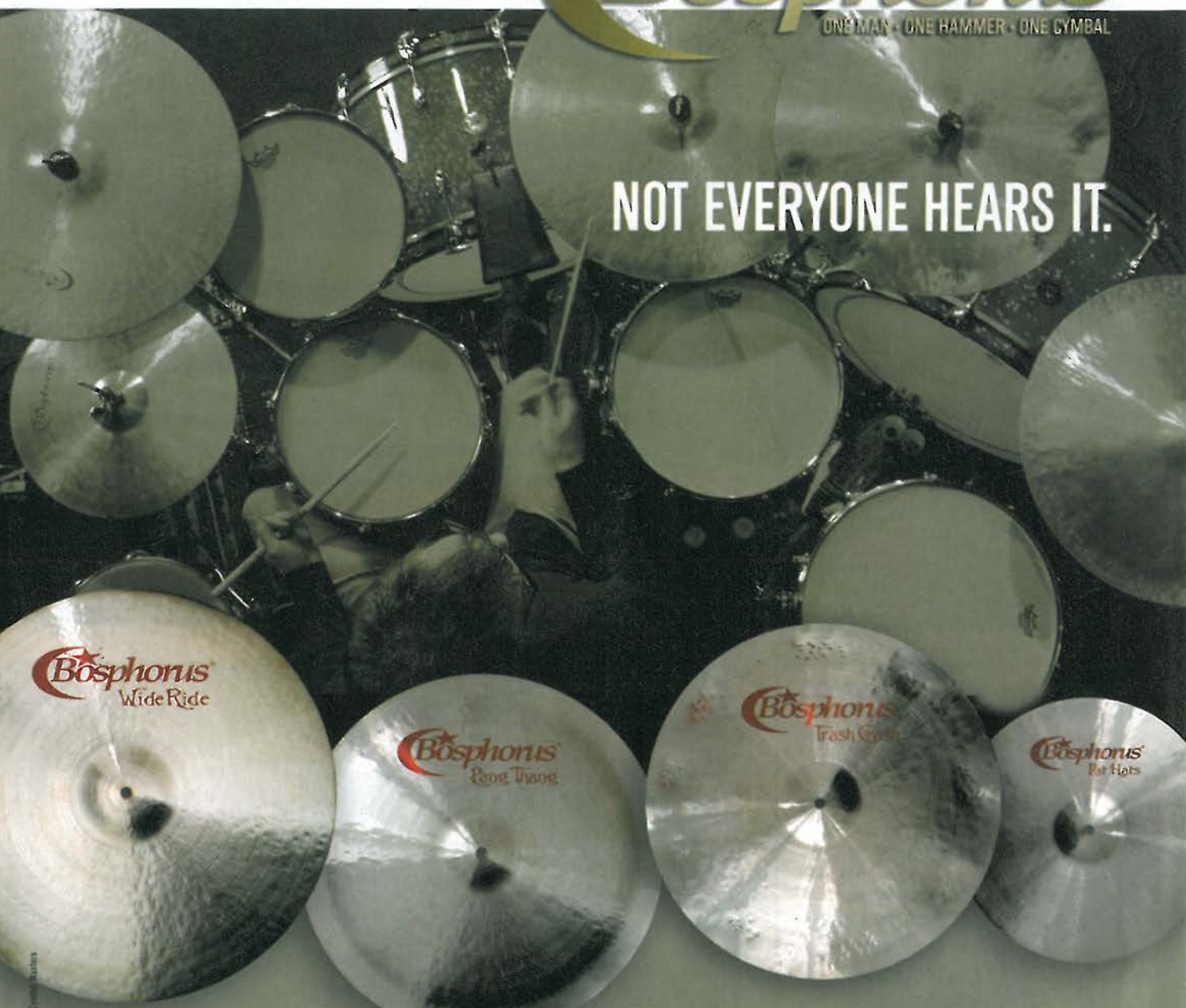

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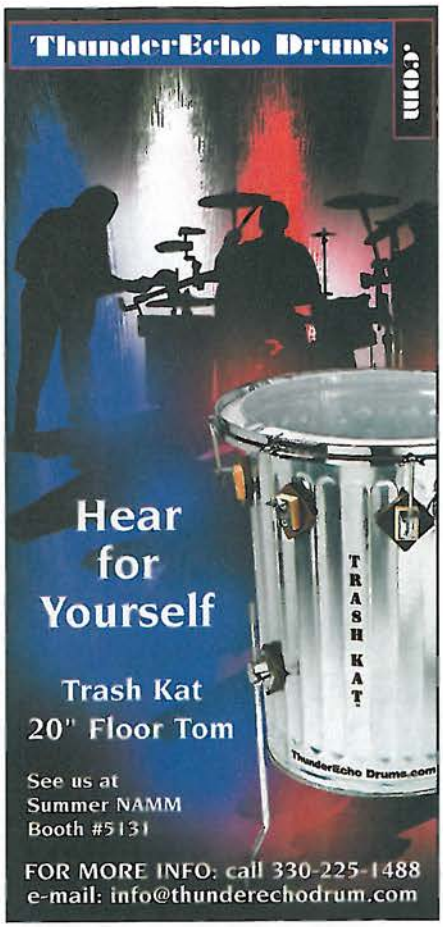

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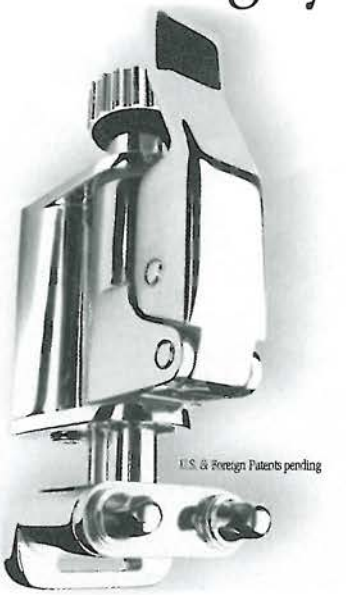

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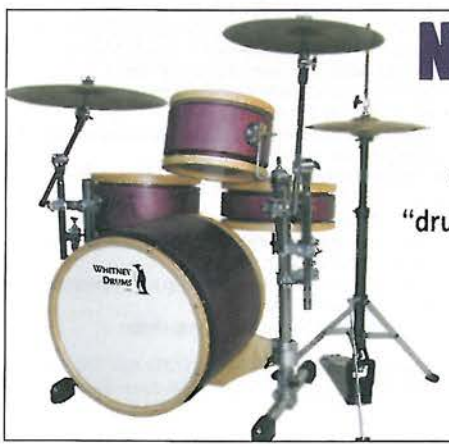

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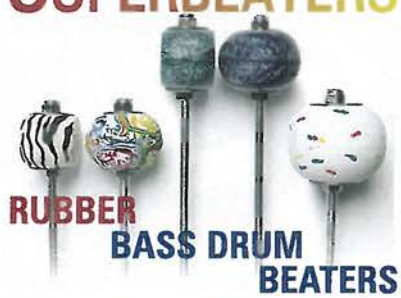
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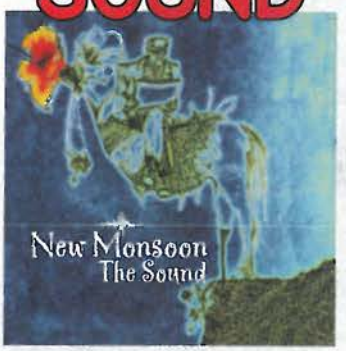

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Terence Blanchard Flow (Blue Note) ♦♦♦♦½

All streams converge with *Flow*, bringing together Terence Blanchard's diverse creative directions into one strong cohesive current. As a composer and trumpet player, Blanchard continues to stretch acoustic jazz boundaries, and his current sextet is foremost about gorgeous ensemble sound. Mixing jazz, world influences, and even subtle samples, the sonic palette is sprawling and unpredictable. Take note now of drummer **KENDRICK SCOTT**, an up-and-comer delivering a powerful, emotive performance. Channeling a myriad of styles through a jazz heart, Kendrick cuts a commanding arrival in the big leagues. **Jeff Potter**

Defunkt Journey (independent) ♦♦♦½

This live recording from a recent European tour attests to the staying power of this New York sextet. The seating of drummer **TOBIAS RALPH** and percussionist **KAHIL EL ZABAR** is responsible for a great deal of Defunkt's current lift. Ralph lets loose on "Rocket," slamming some hardcore funk. Keeping with its longtime penchant for political rap, the band offers "Why Can't We See," and Ralph backs bari-saxman **Alex Harding** on an edgy romp, jumping on and offbeat. **Adam Kipple**'s distorted Rhodes replaces **K. Bell**'s guitar, and El Zabar's assortment of earth drums, ashiko, bells, and shakers add earthy energy. (www.defunktmusic.com) **Robin Tolleson**

Adema Planets (Earache) ♦♦♦

With a pair of radio hits and a stint on OzzFest under their belts, hard rock vets Adema have returned with a new album. With the experienced drummer **KRIS KOHLS** on board, *Planets* brings forth a host of fresh ideas, including the fragmented phrasing during the verses of "Tornado" and the tom/snare interplay of "Sevenfold." But all isn't constantly full-throttle here, as Kohls also lays back and lets the song take center stage. Still, Kohls excels at performing more ensemble-oriented licks—the double-kick interaction of "Better Living Through Chemistry" is a great example—and it's such versatility that makes *Planets* an enjoyable listen. **Waleed Rashidi**

Art Bears Hopes & Fears (ReR) ♦♦♦

Chris Cutler Twice Around The Earth (ReR) ♦♦♦

Chris Cutler has always flown beneath the radar of modern drumming consciousness, working with the experimental likes of Pere Ubu, Henry Cow, and The Residents, to name a few. This is non-profit music with true art as its only goal. Cutler bashes thumping drums and a trash percussion collection on the Art Bears disc, his drumming a methodical, feverish, and freakish commentary on the band's subversive theatrics. *Twice Around The Earth* is pure Cutler, a non-drumming outing of unusual field/ambient recordings taken from his London radio show, Out Of The Blue Radio. **Ken Micallef**

Significant Reissues by Ken Micallef

Ike Quebec, Hank Mobley, Johnny Coles, Tina Brooks

Ah! More gems from the Blue Note vaults yield remastered sonics, a few bonus tracks, and outstanding drumming from the finest jazz practitioners of the 1960s. **AL HAREWOOD** greases the grooves of tenor saxophonist Ike Quebec's smoky *Heavy Soul* (1961) with equal parts silky time feel and an R&B infused approach. On *High Voltage* **BILLY HIGGINS** mirrors Hank Mobley's more forward-thinking hard bop (from '67) with his typically jubilant snare jabs and trademark cymbal dance. Apart from his own *Basra* album, **PETE LA ROCA** never quite received the attention he deserved, but a 1963 date with trumpeter Johnny Coles, *Little Johnny C*, shows off his meaty swing feel and agitated groove to good style. The ringer from this set is Tina Brooks' *True Blue*, a 1960 recording that was for years available only in Japan. Brooks was a gifted composer and saxophonist, and **ART TAYLOR**'s agile drumming only highlights the memorable tunes of this long-lost classic.

Layne Redmond

Invoking The Muse (Sounds True) ♦♦♦½

Invoking The Muse is a tribute to the forces that represent intuition, inspiration, and creativity. This is a beautiful collection of tunes primarily composed by Redmond and performed with her musical partner **Tony Brunjes** (who also engineered) as well as vocalists **Ruth Cunningham** (Anonymous 4) and **Laurel Massé** (Manhattan Transfer), violinist **Vicki Richards**, and flutist **Steve Gorn**. The tunes that stand out are the duos with Redmond and Brunjes, "The Whistler," which features the Paleolithic bullroarer (an eerie sound that is supposed to summon the deity), and "Proclaimer," a powerful tambourine duet. The masterful hand drumming here is an inspiration. **David Licht**

Stutterfly And We Are Bled Of Color (Maverick) ♦♦♦

Splitting the difference between the metallic passages of Chevelle and the melodic sensibilities of Hoobastank is Canada's Stutterfly, whose Maverick debut finds the band ably delving into modern rock's subgenres. **RYAN LOERKE**'s performance is both supportive and transparent, carefully assembling his grooves and synchronizing them with the chunky rhythm guitar riffs—or in the case of "Burnt Memories," the driving bass line. There's no flashy presentation here, just straightforward, uncomplicated licks interspersed with well-laid punches. And for what Stutterfly is trying to accomplish, adopting such a no-nonsense modus operandi works perfectly. **Waleed Rashidi**

John Scofield

That's What I Say: The Music Of Ray Charles (Verve) ♦♦♦½

John Scofield threw a party in the recording studio, with thirteen of Ray Charles' hits as the guests of honor. Distinguished fellow revelers include vocalists **Dr. John**, **Aaron Neville**, and **Mavis Staples**. Sco's guitar handles the melodies on the instrumental tracks, and his bluesy, highly expressive phrasing provides fresh sounds while staying true to the spirit of Brother Ray. **STEVE JORDAN**'s beats, swinging, funky, and popping with authority, add a joyous bounce throughout. If you don't understand the idea of being in the pocket, just listen to Jordan; he boils each of his patterns down to the essence of groovyness. **Michael Parillo**

Enuma Elish Leviathan (Lithiq) ♦♦♦

Both caustic and strangely soothing, this hypnotic-exotic music cultivated by **Warren Jones** (winds, loops, samples) and **YURI ZBITNOFF** (acoustic and electronic drums and percussion) is a sonic forest ablaze with trance-inducing jazz, electronica, and world genres. Zbitnoff's hypersensitivity shadows the depths and shallows of each of these thickly layered hybrid compositions (including those dense with ethnic strings and field recordings), and his fiery percussion excursions partially fuel the music's mysteriously combustible nature. Though Zbitnoff's slinky patterns can be charted, we can't help but think that an intangible force guided these recorded performances. (www.lithiq.com) **Will Romano**

Bennett Paster, Gregory Ryan, Keith Hall Skyline (independent) ♦♦♦♦½

Let the sidemen have their say. These rising players have collectively amassed an impressive list of credits behind jazz notables. But one thing is clear: They've definitely found their musical soul mates in each other. On their own indie release, pianist Paster, bassist Ryan, and drummer **KEITH HALL** radiate warmth, vitality, robust melodicism, and an effortless swing. All three contribute strong writing, and Paster's ballad, "If I Said Goodbye," is a gem. With a nimble, grooving, "melodic" touch, Hall knows how to tell a story. Elegant. (www.cdbaby.com) **Jeff Potter**

Laurence Elder Surrounded (independent) ♦♦♦♦

If you've been scratching around for intelligent pop and coming up with dry holes, maybe you should be digging singer Laurence Elder, who comes off as a mix of Lowell George, Chris Rea, and Bruce Hornsby. Elder is loose and playful with his jazzy piano and vocals, and his songs are smart and tuneful. At the helm is Ruben Blades' sideman, **CARLOMAGNO ARAYA**, who co-produced the date. Carlo contributes slick, exquisitely recorded drumming. At times he reminds of Vinnie with his authoritative flams, precarious tom fills, and deliciously intricate cymbal work. Special guests include **Paquito D'Rivera** and **PETER ERSKINE**. (www.laurenceelder.com) **T. Bruce Wittet**

Leslie Pintchik So Glad To Be Here (Ambient) ♦♦♦♦

SATOSHI TAKEISHI makes quite a splash on this trio release led by excellent New York pianist Pintchik. A truly unencumbered drummer who is always thinking sound, Takeishi makes the standard "All The Things You Are" feel brand new. Part Tain, part Trilok, Takeishi will stop a beat at any time to roll a cymbal or switch to his colorful "heavy metal" percussion. And the absence of hi-hat and snare in usual spots gives this a fascinating perspective. "Hopperesque" exemplifies the importance of the toms and cymbals in his groove, while "Let's Get Lucky" shows off his insistent, dynamic, and free-wheeling pulse. **Robin Tolleson**

Of Further Interest

The second series of albums in Mute/Spoon records' Can reissue series includes *Future Days*, *Landed*, *Soon Over Babaluma*, and *Unlimited Edition*. Those new to **Jaki Liebezeit**'s unique take on groove-heavy art-space-rock will most certainly be knocked out.

The Jack Bruce Collector's Edition compiles tracks from the legendary Cream bassist's '80s/'90s period. Featured drummers are Jack's Cream bandmate **Ginger Baker** and Indo-fusion master **Trilok Gurtu**, not to mention heavies like **Simon Phillips**, **Stuart Elliot**, and **Mark Nauseef**.

MD readers who caught John Riley's *Essential Listening* column this past May will be happy to know that one of the hard-to-find classic brush recordings he mentioned has been reissued. ***Jo Jones**: The Everest Years* includes the legendary drummer's 1958 trio date mentioned in the article, as well as the 1960 LP *Vamp 'Til Ready*. (www.empirmusicworks.com)

Extreme Beats (Southern Style) by Jeff Perlah

Deranged, herky-jerky metal-core/screamo reigns supreme on Norma Jean's second album, *O God, The Aftermath*. On "Murderotica" and the almost-tuneful "Bayonetwork," the Atlanta band's drummer, **DANIEL DAVIDSON**, offers unpredictable, speaker-slicing chops that are something to behold. These Christians sacrifice zilch in terms of insane artistry. (Solid State)

It's been four years since New Orleans sludge-metal royalty Crowbar inflicted their menacing grooves. The group's eighth album, *Lifesblood For The Downtrodden*, is a punishing affair thanks to a new rhythm section: original drummer **CRAIG NUNENMACHER** and ex-Pantera bassist **Rex Brown**. (Drummer Tommy Buckley and bassist Pat Bruders are in the touring lineup.) "Slave No More" scorches the soul as Nunenmacher nails numerous signatures with brawny toms and nimble cymbals. Welcome back, guys. (Candlelight)

Norma Jean, Crowbar, Losa

Texas metallers Losa attack from all directions on their debut full-length, *The Perfect Moment*, with classic fury, black/death assaults, speedy freakouts, odd and arty excursions, and mega-melodics. The results will knock you on your ass and leave you gasping for the volume knob (to turn things up). A key component is the crisp, creative drumming of **DAVID HALL**, who stands out with devastating force, detail-oriented finesse, and an ear for the subtle. (Metal Blade)

DVDs

Take It To The Street!
A Traditional Approach To New Orleans Drumming
A Modern Approach To New Orleans Drumming

by Stanton Moore (Carl Fischer)
level: intermediate to advanced, $29.95 (each)

New Orleans native Stanton Moore reveals his unique variations on the multi-cultural rhythms of The Big Easy in this well-structured two-disc set (sold separately). In solo situations, with The Dirty Dozen Brass Band, and with other top sidemen, Moore explains and performs examples of his customized grooves based on simple traditional concepts. Moore knows his drumming history and thoroughly explains the topics in a laid-back, organic, yet educational manner. The traditional disc focuses on developing the basic elements of New Orleans drumming. The modern disc expands those concepts into a diverse rhythmic vocabulary useful for many of today's musical styles. Highlights (on the Traditional disc only) include an invaluable special feature with Moore and New Orleans drum legend Johnny Vidocovich discussing and performing examples of how the traditional foundation works in a variety of musical settings. Excellent split-screen and overhead camera angles, combined with superb sound quality, make this an outstanding production at an affordable price.

Mike Haid

Steve Smith, Parts 1 And 2

by Steve Smith (Warner Bros.)
level: all, $29.99 (each)

These "pre shaved head"–era instructional videos made the drumming world stand up and take notice that Smith was much more than the rock drummer who played with Journey. Now conveniently packaged on two separate DVDs, Smith's concepts on developing strong time, a balanced feel on the kit, and a practical approach for productive practicing (all on Part 1) are more valid now than ever. Part 2 advances into Smith's forte of understanding odd groupings, creating interesting drum parts, and developing solos with them. Lots of outstanding bonus footage of Smith's archived solos, as well as group performances with Steps Ahead and Vital Information, among others, make these DVDs a new-found treasure.

Mike Haid

Afro-Cuban Coordination For The Drumset

by Maria Martinez (Hal Leonard)
level: intermediate to advanced, $19.95 (DVD w/ booklet)

Preferring clarity over flash, Ms. Martinez offers incisive, no-nonsense instruction. Respected as a drummer with top-shelf credits, and as a busy teacher/clinician, Martinez packs the max into this brief (48-minute) but informative disc. Opening with an explanation of clave, Martinez then covers mambo, nanigo, songo, and mozambique styles. Each section is capped by quintet performances that are well-chosen examples. And the drumming is outstanding throughout. Newly reissued on DVD, there are no added features. But if you missed it the first time around, take advantage of the upgraded format.

Jeff Potter

Taking The Reins
New drummer-led releases on CD

Doug Hammond Trio, *With Dwight Adams And Pablo Nahar*, www.opus-x.de/doug/default.htm

Jeff "Siege" Siegel, *Magical Spaces*, www.jeffsiegeljazz.com

George Mel, *Winding Road*, www.georgemel.com

Dan Weiss, *Tintal Drumset Solo*, www.danweiss.net

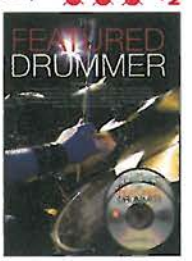
Andrew Scott Potter, *Preciosa*, www.cdbaby.com/cd/asp

Don Peretz, *Foremen*, www.freshsoundrecords.com

BOOKS

The Featured Drummer

by Terry Silverlight (Amsco Publications)
level: advanced, $19.95 (book with two CDs)



Silverlight pinpoints a specific, advanced concept and plumbs it thoroughly. The focus is odd, over-the-barline rhythmic groupings as applied to fills and grooves. Newly reissued, the volume now includes two much-needed demonstration CDs featuring the author with guests **John Patitucci** (bass) and **Barry Miles** (keyboards). As the complexity of the groupings increase, the ear is challenged to a boggling game of "where's one?" Outside of fusion, the patterns may not have obvious immediate practical use. But troopers who persevere through the toughest parts should benefit from increased four-way independence and an enhanced sense of centering within polyrhythmic freedom.

Jeff Potter

Turn It Up & Lay It Down, Vol 1: Style And Analysis

by Joe Bergamini, Kevin Fuhrman, and Spencer Strand (Warner Bros./IMP)
level: intermediate to advanced, $24.95 (with CD)

This is *not* your run-of-the-mill instructional book. Basing this package on the CD series by Spencer Strand that has only bass guitar lines and click tracks, Joe Bergamini and Kevin Fuhrman have now written some heavy-duty grooves that complement the original CDs. Also included with this 78-page monster is a CD that clearly demonstrates each lesson. Many grooves from funk, jazz, and rock to Afro-Cuban are covered in amazing detail. As if that weren't enough, the reader gets to dig into some famous beats by such drummers as Steve Gadd, Jeff Porcaro, and many more. Each of the seven chapters has three sections—basic, intermediate, and advanced—and ends with a "materials for further practice" page. Also at the end of all these lessons are some solos and fills, just for fun. Talk about getting your money's worth. Strand, Bergamini, and Fuhrman have penned a wonderful book.

Fran Azzarto

MD Radio

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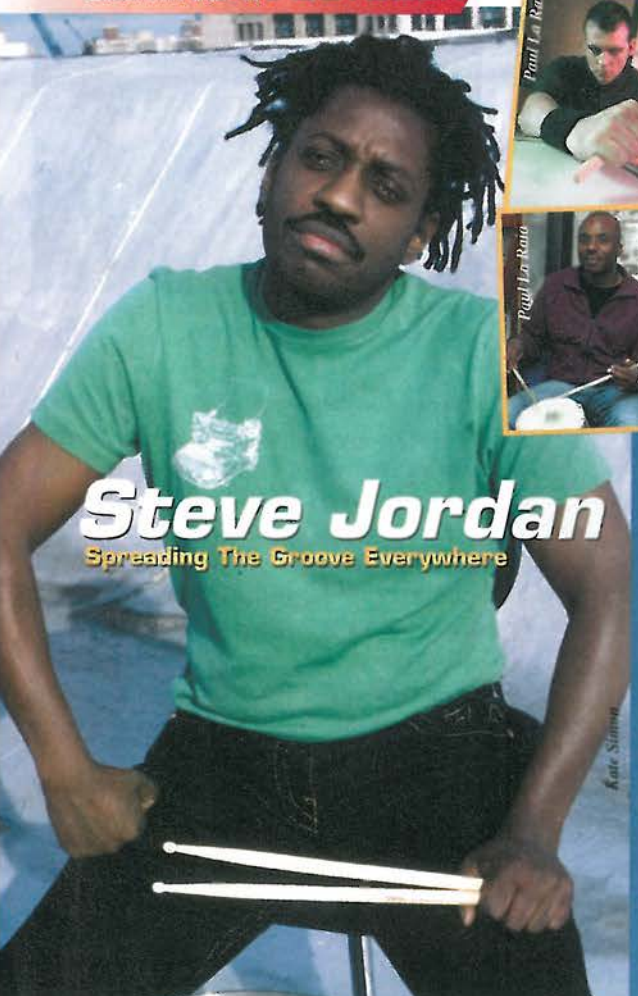

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Drummers For Jesus '05

The second annual International Drummers For Jesus Celebration was held this past March 11–12 at Lakepointe Church in Rockwall, Texas. This event brings people from all over the world together to share their love of drumming and their relationship with Jesus Christ.

At Friday night's opening concert, an energetic group called **Triibe** infused rap with praise & worship music while employing acoustic and electronic drums and ethnic percussion. **John Blackwell** and **Teddy Campbell** next played together, setting up a deep groove and trading some ferocious fours. A tasteful samba brush groove from **Russ Miller** evolved into a burning swing. Russ concluded with an excellent solo using sticks.

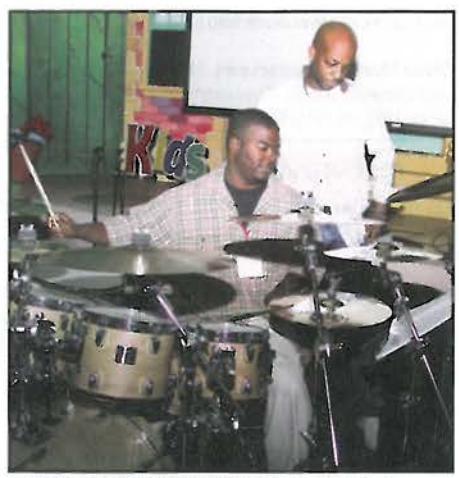
A percussion trio featuring **Alex Acuña** on drums and **Richie "Gajate" Garcia** and **Jorge Ginorio** on percussion created infectious rhythms, compelling the listener not only to hear the groove but also to live in it. Teddy Campbell then took the throne again, scorching the drums with his full-throttle style and playing syncopated riffs around the time signature.

The fiery **Alvaro Lopez** blazed effortlessly on his kit. **Andrew Beall** then performed an intense solo piece on the marimba, followed by a marching snare drum number that also featured rudimental specialist **Bill Bachman** on quads. **Sean McCurley** focused on the subtleties that bring songs to life: a crisp hi-hat figure or a well-placed kick. Bill Bachman then returned to play the quads like a man with more than two arms.

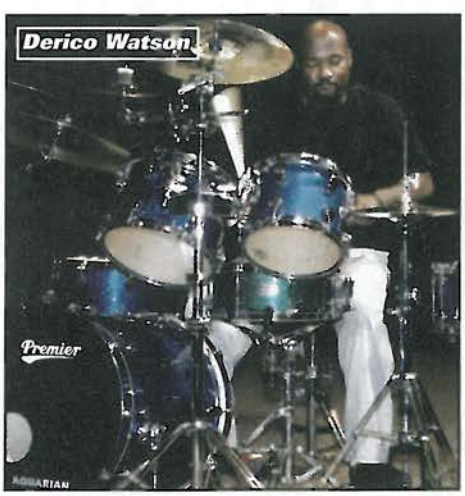
Show closer and crowd favorite John Blackwell played his heart out. Then, for the first time, he shared a few details surrounding the recent loss of his daughter. All of the artists came on stage and asked the audience to join them in prayer for John and his family.

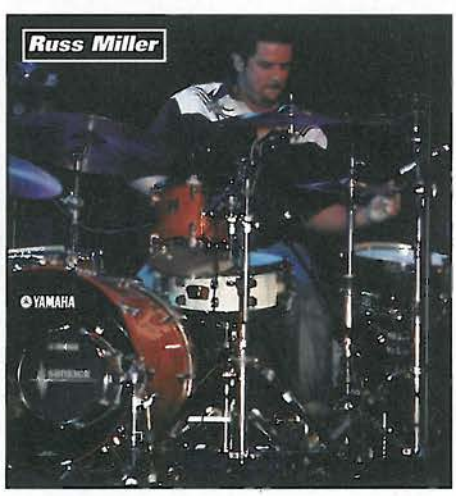
Saturday's program focused on clinics. Bill Bachman demonstrated the Moeller stroke and discussed how rudiments can be applied stylishly to the kit. Drummer **Steve Allison** and percussionist **Steven Talac** played flawlessly to segments from a DVD of their praise & worship service from the Lakepointe Church.

Brazilian-born **Julio Figueroa** displayed various Latin grooves with authority and fluidity. Victor Wooten's **Derico Watson** had jaws dropping throughout the house with his dynamic expressions on the kit and incredible single-pedal foot control. And master classes and private lessons were held by **Louis Santiago Jr.** and Gospel drum star **Christopher Coleman**.



Gospel drummer Christopher Coleman (seated) offered private lessons on Saturday.





You don't have to be a Christian to attend or enjoy the DFJ celebration. The incredible roster of performing artists and clinicians make this a must-see event for any drummer. A DVD of last year's DFJ show, featuring **Vinnie Colaiuta, Sheila E, Alex Acuña, Paul Leim, Will Kennedy, Marvin McQuitty**, and many more artists is now available. A DVD from the 2005 event will be released soon. Check out www.drummersforjesus.com for details.

Story and photos by Rodney Harrison Sr.

Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival

The 2005 Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival, held this past February 23–26, drew more than 10,000 student musicians to the University of Idaho, in Moscow, Idaho. Dozens of top-shelf jazz artists from around the world gave clinics on campus and performed at evening concerts in the Kibbie Dome. Among the artists were Freddy Cole, Jane Monheit, John and Bucky Pizzarelli, and Roy Hargrove.

Most visiting artists were backed by the assembled house band, which included Benny Green on piano, Russell Malone on guitar, John Clayton on bass, and **Jeff Hamilton** on drums. Jams by this A-list band were sometimes more entertaining than the artists they supported. Hamilton, a festival regular, was particularly impressive, showing off his melodic chops on "A Night In Tunisia" with trumpeter Randy Brecker.

Drew Shoals, a senior at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, was named the festival's outstanding solo collegiate drummer. He performed at an evening concert with the other collegiate solo winners. "It was an honor just to sit down at the same throne as Jeff Hamilton," said Shoals, who plans to pursue drumming professionally after graduation. **Eytan Nicholson** of Garfield High School in Seattle was the festival's outstanding solo high school drummer.

Bob Ferreira played a two-piece kit and sang bass in the latest incarnation of The Four Freshmen. Commenting on the competing students, Ferreira said, "It's nice to see that look in their eyes—that hunger."

Other drummers at the festival included the Lionel Hampton New York Big Band's **Wally "Gator" Watson**, Portland-based **Brian Wright** (with pianist Jim Martinez), **Eduard Zizak** of the Igor Butman Sextet, and **Rich Montalbano** (Jane Monheit). In addition, **Aleksandr Zinger** (drums) and **Anatoliy Tekuchev** (vibes) performed with a group of Russian musicians sponsored by a grant from the Library Of Congress's Open World Program.

The 2006 Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival will run February 22–25. For more information, visit www.jazz.uidaho.edu.

Story and photos by Chris Kornelis

Mission From Gadd Tour

Zildjian recently completed its "Mission From Gadd" US clinic tour, featuring drumming icon Steve Gadd. Zildjian and the hosting dealers all cited the tour as an overwhelming success. Steve had not performed clinics since 1986, and has long been Zildjian's most requested artist, making this one of the most highly anticipated and well-attended clinic tours ever.

Steve Gadd at Drum Daze, Columbus, Ohio.

Highlights included Zildjian CEO Craigie Zildjian making a special appearance at Fork's Drum Closet in Nashville, and Steve's sixtieth birthday on April 9 at Explorer's Percussion in Kansas City, Missouri (though most of the hosting dealers presented Steve with birthday cakes). Zildjian also conducted a live Web chat with Steve during the tour.

Steve and the accompanying Zildjian staff (including John DeChristopher, John King, Jim McGathey, Paul Francis, and Jason LaChapelle) traveled on a fully equipped tour bus, complete with Steve's personal drumset, often driving through the night to cover the long distances between each city. Each clinic stop featured an afternoon "meet and greet" with Steve, where he would sign autographs and pose for photos. The evening clinics were nothing short of spectacular, with all of the hosting dealers reporting their largest crowds ever. Log on to www.zildjian.com for photos and video of the tour.

Indy Quickies

The U.S. Small Business Administration has doubly honored **Tom Shelley**, founder and president of **Universal Percussion**. In February of this year, Tom was named the 2005 "Small Business Person Of The Year" for the SBA's Cleveland District, which covers twenty-eight counties in Ohio. And on March 15, Tom received word that he had been selected as the Person Of The Year for the entire state of Ohio. In April, Tom attended ceremonies in Washington, DC honoring recipients from all states.

Tom, a drummer since childhood, went into business right out of high school in 1976. He opened a small retail store called The Drum Shop, using $1,000 he had saved from playing gigs. That 400-square-foot shop has evolved into a multi-million-dollar business recognized as the largest percussion-only distributor in the US. Universal also has its own proprietary products, including Attack drumheads, Wuhan cymbals, and Cannon percussion and accessories.

Gibraltar has launched their "How To Build It" Rack Factory Clinic Tour. The clinics will give dealers and consumers the chance to meet the team behind Gibraltar's Rack Factory, and to learn rack-building techniques from the experts. The team will also offer tips and tricks for cymbal and drum mounting. Consumer names will be entered into drawings to win Gibraltar Intruder pedals and other door prizes. For more information visit www.gibraltarhardware.com.

Gibraltar's Rack Factory tour makes a stop at the International House Of Music in Los Angeles.

Zildjian is running a sweepstakes in support of the new A Zildjian Fast Crashes introduced at the 2005 Summer NAMM show. From August 1, 2005 until January 15, 2006, consumers can enter the Matt Sorum A Zildjian Sweepstakes for a chance to visit Zildjian's headquarters in Norwell, Massachusetts, and to meet Velvet Revolver drummer Matt Sorum. Entry forms will only be available from participating dealers, and not online.

Three grand prize winners will be able to come to Zildjian, meet Matt personally, and select a six-piece cymbal setup from the Zildjian vault. Also included in the grand prize are 36 pairs of Matt Sorum's new Artist Series Drumstick, Zildjian BASICS items, and the A Zildjian exclusive *Backstage* promotional DVD featuring Matt. Twenty-five second-prize winners will receive one A Zildjian Fast Crash cymbal of their choice, 12 pairs of Matt's new drumstick, BASICS items, and the DVD. Fifty third-prize winners will receive six pairs of Matt's drumsticks and the DVD.

MIPA Awards

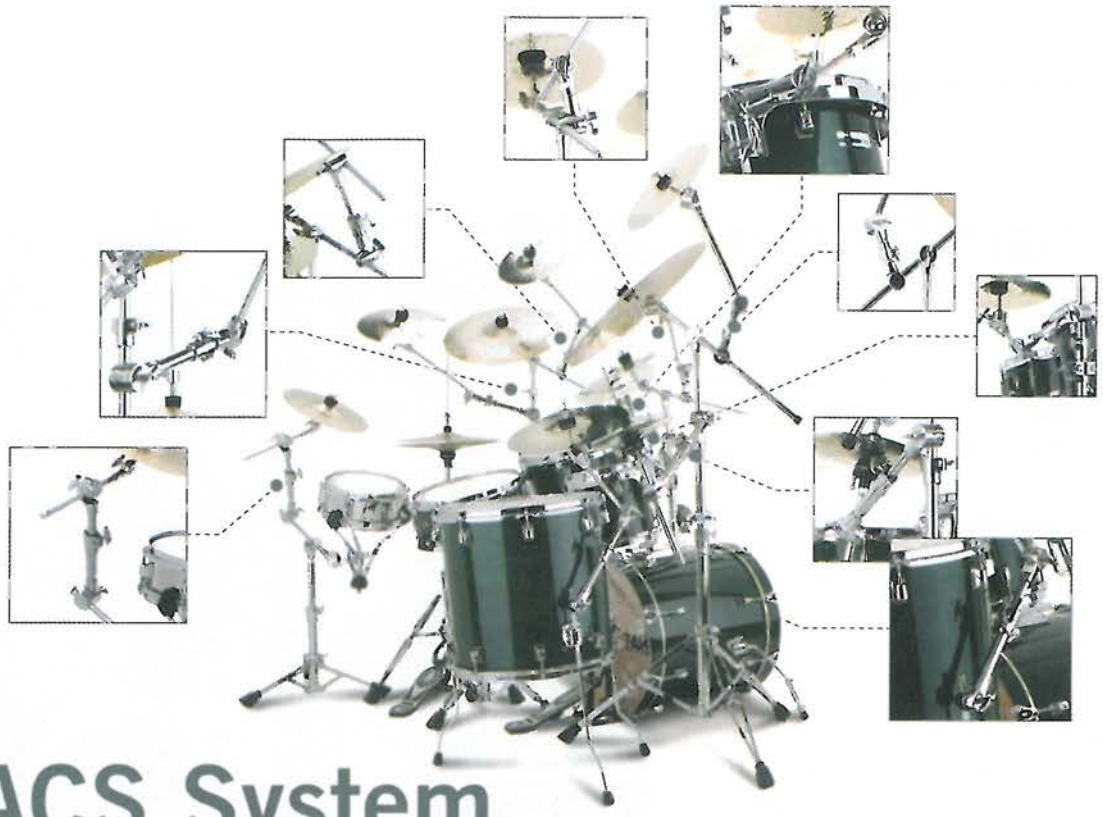
Fifty-eight of the world's music magazines (including *Modern Drummer*) joined to vote for the Musikmesse International Press Awards, presented this past March at the Frankfurt Musikmesse in Germany. The awards honor product achievements in a variety of categories.

The winner for acoustic drums was **Pearl**'s Reference Series. Pearl also took top honors for drum hardware with their Advanced Hardware system.

The award for cymbals went to **Sabian** for their Vault Artisan rides. (This was their third award in four years.) Sabian founder **Robert Zildjian** was also presented with a special Lifetime Achievement award.

Meinl's Luis Conte Signature congas were named Best Percussion Instrument—Meinl's fourth such award.

Vic Firth (left) congratulates Sabian founder Robert Zildjian on his receipt of a special MIPA Lifetime Achievement award.



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06. SlideTrack™ Bass Mount Tom Holder (Patented) Infinite tom positioning with integrated cymbal boom arm receiver.

07. Integrated Boom Arm Receiver Standard on all Taye tom holder systems.

08. Bass Drum Spurs Adjustable folding bass drum spur with SpringFlex design to allow full bass drum resonance.

09. BallTilter Snare Stand Ball joint for precise infinite range of adjustment.

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TAYE DRUMS

Stan Levey
Jazz Original

Stan Levey, who played with Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and other musical giants, died this past April 19. He was seventy-nine.

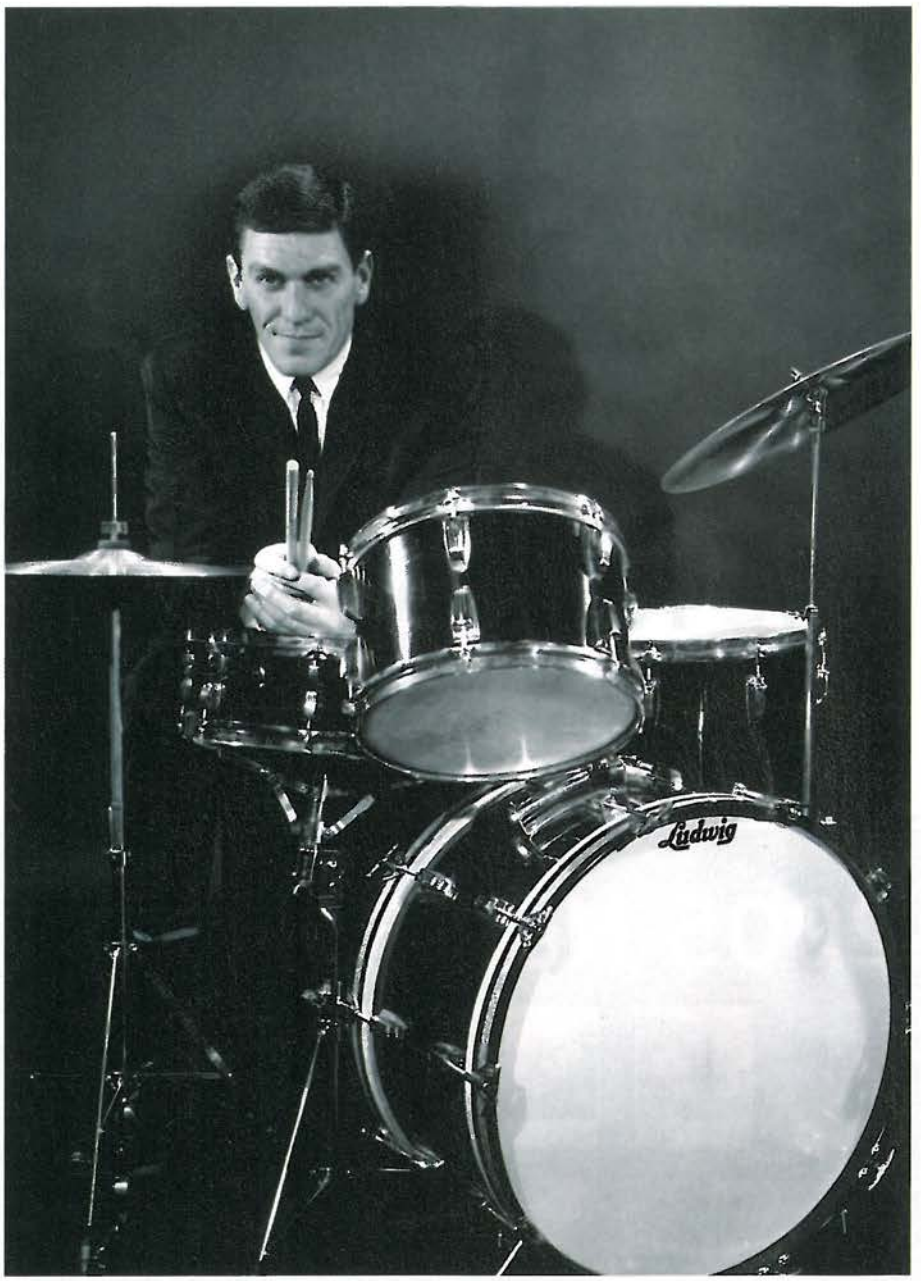
Levey was a key figure in the development of modern jazz drumming. "Bird and Max were responsible for the way I thought about music," Levey once said. "I came to realize that being musical was the most important thing. Just sit down and do the job. Play time and make the other players feel good."

Levey was born in Philadelphia in 1925. He began playing at the age of seven, and studied piano and arranging in high school. His career began in the Philly area, where he played with Dizzy Gillespie. After his arrival in New York in 1944, he worked with bassist Oscar Pettiford, and again with Gillespie at New York's famed Onyx. He became an accepted member of the New York jazz fraternity, playing with artists such as Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Erroll Garner, Thelonious Monk, and George Shearing.

By 1945, Levey was drumming with bop pioneers like Gillespie and Charlie Parker. Equally at home in big bands, he also worked with Georgie Auld, Stan Kenton, and Charlie Ventura, and he subbed for Dave Tough in Woody Herman's band.

But Levey was happiest in a small-group environment. He played with Howard Rumsey's Lighthouse Allstars in California for six years, then toured with vocalists Peggy Lee and Ella Fitzgerald. He also made several albums with his own quintet and an album with good friend Max Roach called *Drumming The Blues*.

Eventually Levey became part of the LA studio scene. He recorded more than two hundred albums with everyone from Henry Mancini and Frank Sinatra to Pat Boone and Barbra Streisand. He also recorded over three hundred movie soundtracks and more than three *thousand* TV show episodes.



In 1972 Levey went into semi-retirement in order to pursue a lifelong interest in photography. A DVD called *Stan Levey: The Original Original*, in which Levey relates his thirty-year career in music, was released this past February.

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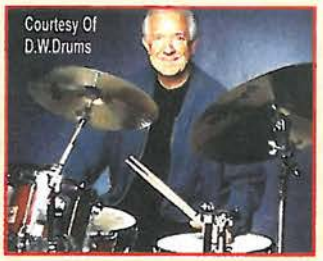

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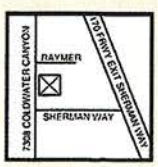

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Gong's Pierre Moerlen

French drummer Pierre Moerlen, best known as the drummer for Gong (and later Pierre Moerlen's Gong), died in his sleep May 3, at his home in Strasbourg, France. He was fifty-three.

Moerlen was a classically trained percussionist. From 1967 to 1971 he studied at the Conservatoire de Strasbourg with Jean Batigne of the famed group *Les Percussion du Strasbourg*. In 1973, he joined the French psychedelic prog band Gong, recording their *Angel's Egg* album. With his conservatory training, he was often regarded as bringing musical legitimacy to the band's more informal "space hippy" music. In 1974 the band recorded what many call their masterpiece, *You*. Amid tales of space gnomes and pothead pixies, Pierre's strong drumming held the music together and propelled it forward.

Moerlen's musical restlessness also caused him to leave the band, only to return later, in a pattern that he would repeat over the years. This created a revolving drum position that at times was filled by the likes of Bill Bruford and Pip Pyle. Eventually the band broke up officially, and Pierre found himself helping to pull together a new, more instrumental Gong. Their album *Shamal* (produced by Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason) moved in a more jazz direction. Moerlen brought in his conservatory classmate, Mirielle Bauer, to play mallet percussion. But he soon found himself on his own, as the group split again after the album was released.

Picking up the pieces, Moerlen took the helm and re-formed the band, adding his brother, Benoit (on mallets) and Mino Cenelu (on percussion) to the lineup of Bauer, bassist Francis Moze, and saxophonist Didier Malherbe. He also brought in then relatively unknown guitarist Allan Holdsworth. They recorded and toured behind the very successful *Gazuese!* album (known as *Expresso* in the US). Moerlen contributed four of the album's seven tracks, including the percussion tour de force, "Percolations, Parts 1 & 2."

Allan Holdsworth remembers Moerlen fondly. "I was really shocked [to hear he died]," he said. "I'm really sad about it, as I loved the guy. He was a great musician—an amazing technician with great chops. I was really only in the band on that one album, although I played as a session guy on a couple of others. When *Gazuese!* came out on CD a few years ago I heard certain things that sounded dated—like myself. But not the drums. It was really cool having tuned percussion. It was a unique concept and a unique-sounding band."

The *Gazuese!* lineup lasted barely one tour before the band broke up again. Pierre went to New York, where he was introduced to a young bassist named Hansford Rowe. "I met Pierre in 1977," say Rowe. "Gong had broken up, and he was looking for new adventures. We became a rhythm unit the moment we played together. I think he liked my bass playing because I loved patterns, structure, and funk. I liked his obsession with precision, and I loved his clarity on the kit. His unrelenting tempo and underlying sense of structure were always there. Whatever he played always sounded coherent and clearly voiced, even in full-bore improvisation."

Virgin Records brought Moerlen and Row to London, offering a new record deal as the rechristened Pierre Moerlen's Gong. Old bandmates Mirielle Bauer and Benoit Moerlen were called in. The group recorded *Expresso II*, before once again disbanding. Pierre then recorded *Downwind* and *Time Is The Key* with Rowe and guest musicians like Allan Holdsworth, Mike Oldfield (of *Tubular Bells* fame), and ex–Rolling Stone guitarist Mick Taylor. This pattern repeated over several more albums until the band split for good, with Rowe and Gong guitarist Bon Lozaga forming the splinter group Gongzilla.

Over the years Pierre toured with Les Percussion du Strasbourg, and guested on recordings such as Mike Oldfield's *Incantations*, *Platinum*, and *Ommadawn*. He spent the '90s playing drums for various musical productions, like *Les Miserables* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, in the US and Europe. He also toured with Brand X and a reformed *You*-era Gong. At the time of his death, Moerlen was in the middle of rehearsals for a new Pierre Moerlen's Gong band, excited to be once again creating the music he loved.

Michael Bettine

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On any given morning, Modern Drummer managing editor Adam Budofsky can be found in his office, poring over hundreds of jazz reissues, double-bass tutorials, and death metal CDs for potential review in MD.

On any given afternoon, Adam can be found crumpled on the floor under a pile of all that stuff, the unfortunate result of an over-enthusiastic air-drumming episode.

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Building A Dream

Monmouth, Maine's Ed Garnier started designing and assembling his "dream kit" in 1993. "It took ten years and $20,000 for the kit to evolve into what you see here," he says.

The drums are Ludwig Classic Maples, with Ringo Starr's Black Oyster Pearl covering. Says Ed, "The covering was made for Ringo. Ludwig found it buried in a pile of old covering material, just before I ordered the drums. Since I grew up playing The Beatles' music, I had to have that covering. There's a matching snare that isn't shown in the photo."

The kit includes a 14x22 bass drum, 8x10, 8x12, and 9x13 rack toms, and 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms—all with classic Ludwig hardware. The primary snare pictured is a Yamaha 6x14 Anton Fig model; the secondary snare is a Remo 5½x14 Louie Bellson model. Twenty-nine Zildjian, Sabian, and Paiste cymbals fly over the drums. They include a 6" Sabian disk and a 6" Sabian AA splash that were on Mike Portnoy's kit and are autographed by him, as well as 12" Sabian Mini-Hats that were used and autographed by David Garibaldi.

The hardware includes a Pearl rack, Gibraltar booms, DW 5000 double pedals, and a mix of Ludwig, Premier, Yamaha, and Gibraltar items. Percussion includes small and large cowbells, a Jam Block, a mounted tambourine, and double-row chimes, all by LP. The kit is fully miked and has its own Mackie console and four monitor speakers. Everything travels in Humes & Berg Enduro cases.

"I'm currently designing an additional overhead rack to expand," says Ed, enthusiastically.

Expand?

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides or high-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.
Send photo(s) to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.

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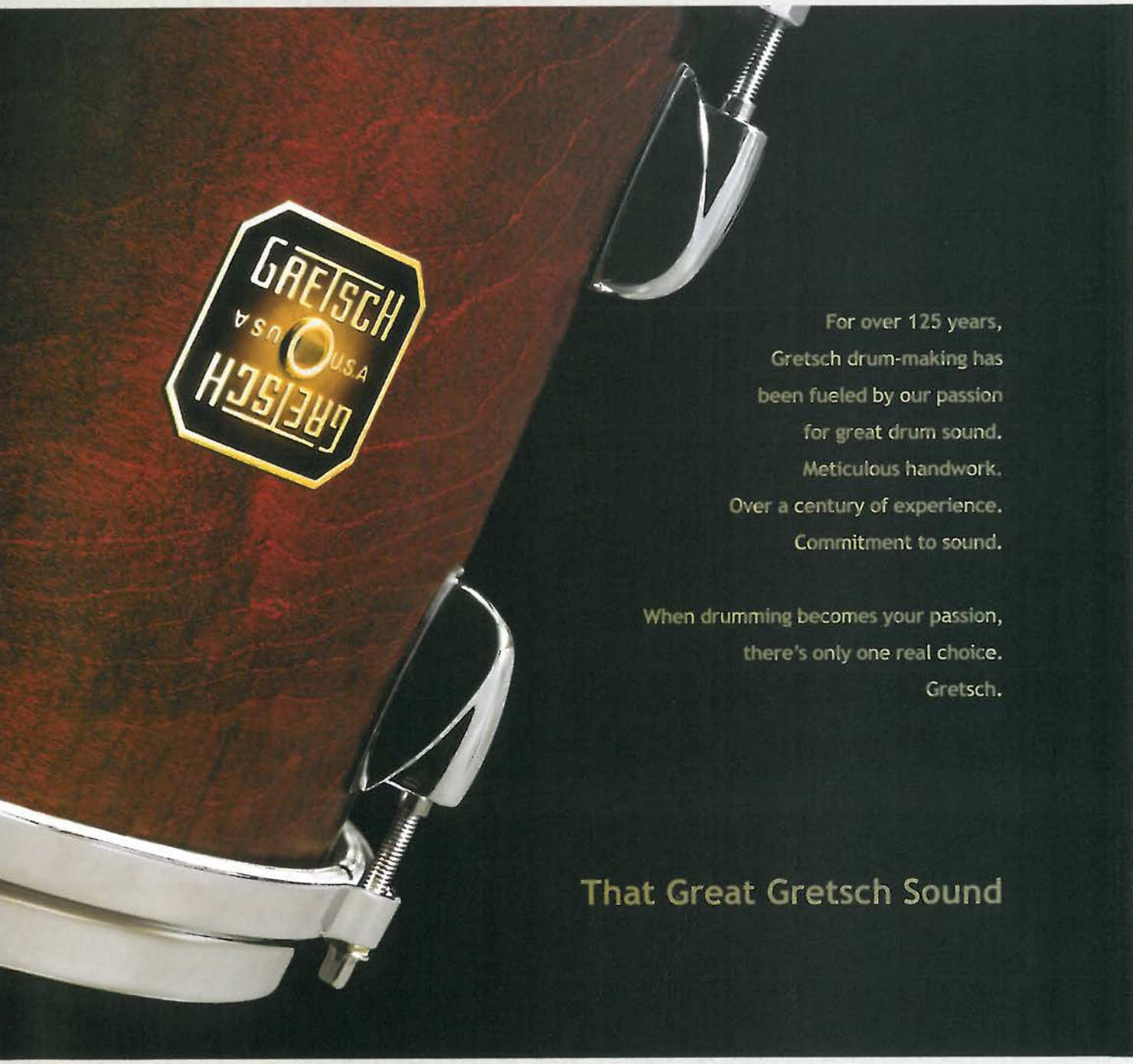

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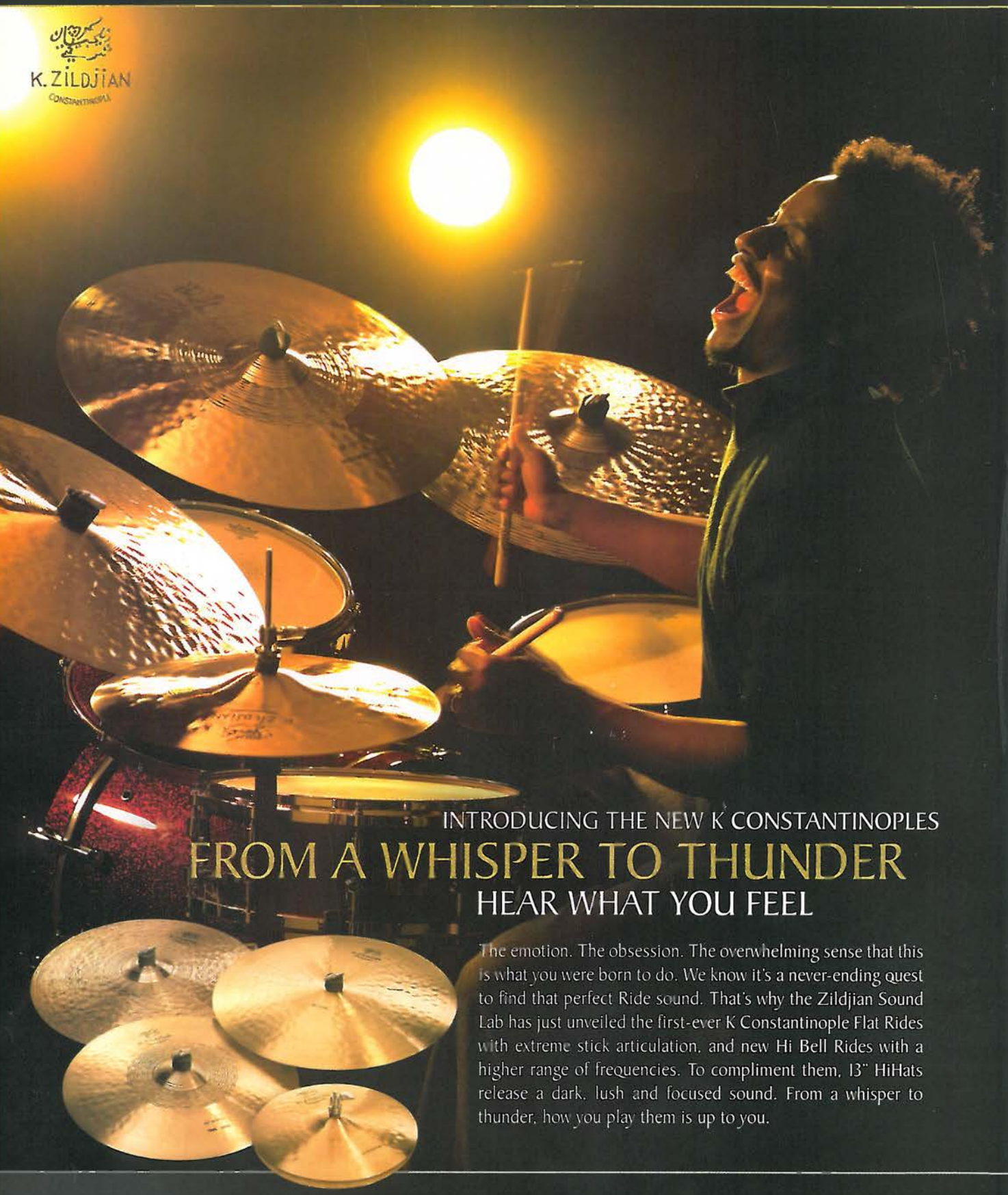

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